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NOTES,

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CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL,

ON THE BOOK OF

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GENESIS;

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DESIGNED AS A GENERAL HELP TO

BIBLICAL READING AND INSTRUCTION.

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By GEORGE BUSH,

PROF. OF HEB. AND ORIENT. LIT., N. Y. CITY UNIVERSITY.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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## PREFACE.

A VERY slight inspection of the pages of the present work will disclose to the reader its general character, and enable him to judge how far it is likely to supply an existing desideratum. Little therefore need be said by way of preface. My main object has been to afford facilities for the correct understanding of the sacred text—to aid the student of the Bible in ascertaining, with the utmost practicable exactness, the genuine sense of the original. With such an object in view it was perhaps impossible to avoid giving the work an aspect predominantly *critical*. But an apology on this score can scarcely be requisite at the present day, when the claims of sacred philology are beginning to be so highly appreciated; when it is so generally admitted that the grand aim of the Scriptural expositor should be to fix with the most absolute precision the ‘mind of the Spirit’ in his own word; and when it is so well understood that this end can be attained only by means of a familiar acquaintance with the original in its verbal and idiomatic peculiarities, its parallel usages, and its archæological illustrations. Besides, unless I have come wholly short of my aim, there will be found such a union of the *practical* with the *critical*, as to adapt the present and the ensuing volumes somewhat happily to popular use. Should this prove not to be the case, I shall feel that the failure has been rather in the execution, than in the plan; for I know no reason to suppose the two departments intrinsically incompatible, or that the two-fold function of the *exegetical* and the *ethical* expositor may not be united in the same person. The idea of combining them to the extent in which it is done in the present volume is no doubt somewhat novel, nor am I sure that occasionally a transition may not be noticed from one

province to the other so abrupt, as to carry with it to the mind of the reader a momentary sensation of incongruity. But such cases I trust will be too few to stamp the experiment as abortive.

No one at all conversant with the subject of biblical annotation but must be aware, that there is a large mass of materials accumulated by the researches or reflections of prior commentators, and constituting a kind of common property, of which each successive labourer in the field feels at liberty to avail himself. The propriety of this is universally conceded, provided he sets up no special claim to what he thus finds made ready to his hands. Indeed it is quite obvious that the credit of *originality* in this department cannot be secured, but at the expense of the greatest measure of *utility*—an expense which I have not seen fit to incur. I have accordingly availed myself freely of all accessible sources of Scripture elucidation that could be made subservient to my plan, and have frequently interwoven with my own remarks, phrases and sentences, and, in some cases, paragraphs from other authors, without the formality of express quotation. But however large may be my indebtedness on this score, it is but justice to myself to say, that I have generally weighed in my own scales the evidence for or against a particular rendering or interpretation, and that after every abatement much will be found in the ensuing pages not to be met with any where else. Of the intrinsic value of these portions of the work the estimate must, of course, be left to those for whose benefit it has been prepared.

In cases of doubtful interpretation, I have, as a general rule, contented myself with giving what I conceived to be the right one, with the evidence in its favour, without distracting the reader's mind by an array of various and conflicting comments. Still less have I indulged the paltry propensity for introducing interpretations differing from my own, merely for the purpose of refuting them. Yet in some instances where the probabilities in favour of opposite or variant expositions were very equally balanced, it seemed but an act of justice to judicious critics to give their several constructions, and I have accordingly in such cases endeavoured to avoid the charge of undue assumption by candidly stating what might be said *against* as well as *for* a proposed interpretation. The number of passages in the compass of the sacred writings is far from small, in respect to which a *positive* determination of the sense is, with our presen



means of explication absolutely impossible.—An exception, however, to the above rule may be observed as it respects the *ancient versions*; particularly the Septuagint, the Chaldee Targums, and the Syriac and Arabic versions. These I have adduced very frequently, not only in dubious and difficult places, where their authority might have weight, but often in the plainer passages, in order that the reader might have the satisfaction of seeing by what shades of difference, the most ancient renderings vary from our own. An account of these several versions, together with an attempted estimate of their value as tributary to the exposition of the sacred text, will be found on a subsequent page.

To some it may be an objection that the pages of the work are so thickly interspersed with words and phrases in the Hebrew and Greek character. On this head I can only say, that if the reader will acquit me, as I readily acquit myself, of the design of giving in this way a learned air to my columns, I shall be willing to submit to some exceptions from one portion of my readers for the sake of another. My settled conviction is, that these notes will go into the hands of numbers of the religious community, especially ministers and theological students, to whom this feature of the work will be a strong recommendation; and perhaps, as the terms are almost invariably translated, besides being often given in English orthography, it is no more than a reasonable demand, that the mere *vernacular* reader should concede this much to the preferences of his more learned brother.

It will be matter neither of surprise nor regret to any one who bears in mind that the Bible is strictly an Eastern book, that I have drawn so largely on Oriental sources of illustration. It is only from such sources that a large portion of the imagery, allusions, and diction of the inspired writers can be adequately explained. The works of Eastern travellers, therefore, have formed a leading department of the apparatus which I have collected together in reference to the present undertaking. Among these the 'Pictorial Bible,' recently published in London, has been a repository from which I have enriched my pages with many of their choicest contents. It is an invaluable treasury of materials for elucidating the topography, the manners and customs, the rites, ceremonies, monuments, and costumes of the East; and this, whether we regard the Engravings or

Notes, both of which are full of new and interesting information. It is deeply to be regretted that the cost of this work is such as will be likely greatly to limit its circulation.

It is my purpose, should a favouring Providence permit, to go over all the historical books of the Old Testament on the same plan. Other indispensable engagements may make the intervals of publication somewhat wide, but if life and health are spared, the work will be continually *in hand* till completed; and so far as it may give presage of useful service to the cause of biblical knowledge and sound piety, I cannot hesitate to assure myself of the prayers of my readers, in conjunction with my own, for the blessing of Heaven to rest upon the enterprise.

G. B.

NEW YORK, Nov. 1st, 1833.

# INTRODUCTION.

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## I.—OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES GENERALLY.

### § 1. *Titles, Divisions, &c.*

THAT collection of writings which is every where regarded by Christians as containing the only true revelation made by God to man, and as the sole standard of faith and practice, is familiarly known by different appellations. Thus it is frequently termed *The Scriptures*, as being the most important of all writings; the *Holy* or *Sacred Scriptures*, because composed by persons divinely inspired; and sometimes the *Canonical Scriptures*, from a Greek word (*κανων canon*) signifying a *rule*, because they were regarded as an infallible *rule* of faith and conduct, and to distinguish them from certain books termed *Apocryphal*, (*αποκρυφοι hidden, concealed,*) from their being of *obscure* and *doubtful* origin, not possessing the proper testimonials to entitle them to a place among the genuine inspired writings. But the most usual appellation is *The Bible* (*βιβλιον* or *βιβλια biblion* or *biblia*, Lat. *liber, book*, from *βιβλος biblos*, an Egyptian reed of the bark of which paper was made). This word in its primary import simply denotes a *book*, but it is applied to the writings of the prophets and apostles by way of emphasis and eminence, as being the *Book of Books*, infinitely superior in excellence and importance to every human composition. This title originated at a very early period, principally from the usage of the Greek Fathers, and has since been generally adopted by the Christian world.

The most common and general division of the canonical Scriptures is into the *Old* and *New Testaments*; the former containing those revelations of the divine will which were communicated to the Hebrews, Israelites, or Jews, before the birth of Christ; the latter comprising the inspired writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. This distinction is founded on 2 Cor. 3. 6, 14. Mat. 26. 28. Gal. 3. 17. Heb. 8. 8.—9. 15—20, where the ancient Latin translators have rendered *διαθηκη diatheke* (which signifies both a *covenant* and a *testament*, but in Biblical usage always answers to the Heb. *ברית berith, a covenant*) by *Testamentum, a testament*; 'because,' says Jerome (Comment. in Mal. ch. 2. 2), 'they by a Græcism attributed to this word the sense of *Fædus, a covenant*.' Were such the usage, therefore, there would be no impropriety in terming the two main portions of the Scriptures the *Old* and *New Covenant*; implying thereby, not two distinct and unrelated covenants, but merely the *former* and

the *latter* dispensation of the one grand covenant of mercy, of which the prophet Jeremiah, ch. 31. 31—34, as expounded by the Apostle, Heb. 8. 6—13, gives so ample a description.

The books of the Old Testament again are usually farther subdivided by the Jews into the *Law* (הַתּוֹרָה *hattorah*), the *Prophets* (הַנְּבִיאִים *hannebeim*), and the *Hagiographa* (הַכְּתוּבִים *hakketubim*, lit. *the writings*, emphatically so called); a classification expressly recognised by our Lord, Luke 24. 44, 'These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the *law of Moses*, and in the *prophets*, and in the *psalms* concerning me;' where by *Psalms* is meant, not merely the book bearing that title in the Scriptures, but what is otherwise termed the *Hagiographa*. In this distribution the *Law* comprised the *Pentateuch*, or *five books of Moses*, which were originally written in one volume, as all the manuscripts are to this day, which are read in the synagogues. The *Prophets* were divided into the *former* and *latter*, in reference to the time when they respectively flourished; the first class containing the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, the two last being each considered as one book; the second comprising Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets, whose books were reckoned as one. The reason why Moses is not included among the prophets, is, because he so far surpassed all those who came after him, in eminence and dignity, that they were not accounted worthy to be placed on a level with him; and the books of Joshua and Judges are reckoned among the prophetic books because they are generally supposed to have been written by the prophet Samuel. The *Ketubim* or *Hagiographa*, that is, the *Holy Writings*, comprehended the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations of Jeremiah, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah (reckoned as one), and the two books of Chronicles, also reckoned as one. This third class or division of the sacred books has received the appellation of *Ketubim*, or *Holy Writings*, because they were not orally delivered as the law of Moses was; but the Jews affirm that they were composed by men divinely inspired, who, however, had no public mission as prophets. It is remarkable that Daniel is excluded from the number of prophets, and that his writings with the rest of the *Hagiographa*, were not publicly read in the synagogues as the Law and the Prophets were. This is ascribed to the singular minuteness with which he foretold the coming of the Messiah before the destruction of the city and sanctuary, and the apprehension of the Jews, lest the public reading of his predictions should lead any to embrace the doctrines of Christianity.

The subordinate division into chapters and verses is of comparatively modern date. The former is attributed to Hugo de Sancto Caro, a Roman Catholic Cardinal, who flourished about A. D. 1240; the latter to Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, a celebrated Jewish teacher, who lived A. D. 1445. The author of the verse-division in the New Testament was Robert Stephens, a distinguished printer of Paris, who lived in the sixteenth century. As this division, however, is not always made with the strictest regard to the connection of parts, it may be considered, to the mere reader or interpreter of the sacred volume, who wishes to obtain a clear, connected view of the chain of narrative, precept, prophecy, or argument of a particular book, as a disadvantage. But on the other hand, the facilities afforded by it in the matter of quotation and reference are so great as

perhaps to counterbalance all other inconveniences. Without some division of this kind it would be next to impossible to frame a Concordance, and yet of all aids to the right understanding of the Scriptures, none is so important as a Concordance.

## § 2. *Language, Mode of Preservation, Incorrupt Integrity, &c., of the Old Testament Scriptures.*

The language in which the Old Testament is written, with the exception of a few passages in Chaldee, is the Hebrew, so called, in all probability, from being principally spoken by the *Hebrew* nation, the descendants, through Abraham, of *Heber*, the grandson of Shem. (See Note on Gen. 10. 21 and 14. 13). This language belongs to a group or family of languages usually termed the *Shemitic*, of which the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic are cognate or kindred branches, in each of which ancient versions exist affording very important aids in the interpretation of the Hebrew text. This text has been transmitted to us in the form of manuscripts, written mostly on vellum or parchment, either *rolled* like a map, or in a book-form, with the contents written in two or three parallel columns. The Jews to this day use no other copies in their synagogues than the *rolled* manuscripts, which are transcribed with the utmost care and exactness, under regulations superstitiously strict, and often in a chirography of extreme beauty. Of these copies it cannot be affirmed of any one now in existence, that it is absolutely perfect. The lapse of time and the numerous transcriptions through which the sacred writings have passed, would naturally expose them in some degree to the inroads of error; and some instances of this kind have been pointed out. But on the whole the integrity of the Scriptures has been remarkably preserved. The most accurate inquiries have been instituted on this head, and the result of the laborious and critical examination of learned men has shown, that the alterations of the sacred text are extremely slight and trivial, and that in all essential points we have the divine revelation as it came from the hands of the several penmen.

## § 3. *Ancient Versions.*

The principal Ancient Versions, which illustrate the Scriptures, are the Chaldee Paraphrases, generally called Targums, the Septuagint or Alexandrian Greek Version, and the Vulgate or Latin Version. In a more detailed view of this subject than we now propose, it would be proper to enumerate also the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, together with the Samaritan, Syriac, and Arabic Versions, but as these are comparatively of secondary importance we shall not at present dwell upon them, but refer the reader who is desirous of fuller information to the Introductions of Horne, Jahn, Carpenter, and others who have treated of them in all their particulars. We shall confine ourselves to the following, which, the reader will observe, are made more especially prominent, by frequent quotation, in the ensuing pages.

(a.) **THE TARGUMS.**—The Chaldee word תרגום *targum* signifies in general *any version or explanation*; but the appellation is more particularly restricted to the versions or paraphrases of the Old Testament, executed in the East-Aramæan

or Chaldee dialect, as it is usually called. These Targums are termed *paraphrases* or *expositions*, because they are rather comments and explications than literal translations of the text. They are written in that dialect, because it became more familiar to the Jews after the time of their captivity in Babylon, than the Hebrew itself; so that when the law was 'read in the synagogue every sabbath-day,' in pure biblical Hebrew, an *explanation* was subjoined to it in Chaldee, in order to render it intelligible to a people who had in a measure lost their native tongue. This practice originated with Ezra, and it is highly probable that the paraphrases were at first merely oral, but that they were afterwards committed to writing for the benefit of those who wished to study and ponder 'the law of the Lord' at home. Indeed there are yet extant some manuscripts in which the text and the paraphrase are written alternately; first, a verse or two or three in Hebrew, and then a corresponding number of verses in Chaldee. But books of this description were not allowed in the public reading of the Law. —There are at present extant ten of these Chaldee paraphrases on different parts of the Old Testament, three of which, and those by far the most important, comprise the Pentateuch, viz. (1.) The Targum of Onkelos; (2.) That falsely ascribed to Jonathan, and usually cited as the Targum of the Pseudo-Jonathan; (3.) The Jerusalem Targum. Of the rest it will be unnecessary here to speak.

*Targum of Onkelos.*—It is not known with certainty at what time Onkelos flourished, nor of what nation he was. The generally received opinion is, that he was a proselyte to Judaism, and a disciple of the celebrated Rabbi Hillel, who flourished about fifty years before the Christian era; and consequently that Onkelos was cotemporary with the Saviour. But Bauer and Jahn place him in the second century. His Targum, embracing the five books of Moses, is justly preferred to all the others, both on account of the purity of its style and its general freedom from idle legends. It is rather a version than a paraphrase, and renders the Hebrew text word for word and with so much accuracy and exactness, that being set to the same musical notes with the original Hebrew, it could be read or cantillated in the same tone as the latter in the public assemblies of the Jews. The best-known Latin translation of this Targum, which we have generally quoted by the simple designation 'Chal.,' is that of Paulus Fagius, and the fullest information concerning it is to be found in a tract by G. B. Winer, entitled, 'De Onkeloso ejusque Paraphrasi Chaldaica Dissertatio, 4to. Lips. 1820.

For the sake of affording the English reader a still clearer idea of the nature of these paraphrases, and how far they differ from the original, we subjoin a specimen of each, in a literal translation ranged in parallel columns with the corresponding passages from our received version.

## ENG. VERSION.

Gen. 1. 2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

v. 11. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

## TARG. OF ONKELOS.

And the earth was waste and empty; and darkness was upon the face of the abyss: and a wind from before the Lord breathed over the surface of the waters.

And the Lord said: Let the earth cause to spring up the tender herb, whose seed may be sown; the fruit-tree producing fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so.



v. 14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years.

v. 20. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

Ch. 2. 7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

v. 8. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

v. 9. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

v. 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

v. 18. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him.

v. 20. And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

v. 24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Ch. 3. 10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

v. 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

And the Lord said: Let there be lights in the expanse of heaven to distinguish between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for to measure by them days and years.

And the Lord said: Let the waters produce the creeping thing endowed with the principle of life, and fowl that may fly over the earth upon the face of the expanse of heaven.

And the Lord God created the man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and it became in the man a speaking spirit.

And the Lord God had planted a garden in Eden from the beginning, and he placed there the man whom he had created.

And the Lord God caused to spring up from the earth every tree that was desirable to be seen, or good for food, and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of whose fruit they who eat are wise in discerning between good and evil.

But of the tree of whose fruit they who eat are wise in discerning between good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death.

And the Lord God said: It is not fit that man should be by himself, I will make for him a support, to be, as it were, his counterpart.

And Adam gave names to all cattle and fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: but for man he did not find a support who was, as it were, his counterpart.

For this cause a man shall leave the bed-chamber of his father and of his mother, and shall adhere to his wife, and they shall be as one flesh.

And he said: I heard in the garden the voice of thy word, and I was afraid, because I am naked, and I hid myself.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy son and her son. He shall remember against thee what thou hast done to him from the beginning, and thou shalt be observant of him unto the end.

*Targum of the Pseudo-Jonathan.*—So called from being ascribed by many to Jonathan Ben Uzziel, who wrote the much esteemed paraphrase on the Prophets. But the difference in the style and diction of this Targum, which is very impure, as well as in the method of paraphrasing adopted in it, clearly proves that it could not have been written by Jonathan Ben Uzziel, who indeed sometimes indulges in allegories, and has introduced a few barbarisms; but this Targum on the Law abounds with the most idle Jewish fables that can well be conceived; which, together with the barbarous and foreign words it contains, renders it of very little utility. Learned men are unanimous in the opinion that

it could not have been written before the seventh, or even the eighth century. Its general character may be learned from a very few specimens.

## ENG. VERSION.

Gen. 1. 2. And the earth was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep : and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

v. 5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night : and the evening and the morning were the first day.

v. 7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament : and it was so.

v. 16. And God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : he made the stars also.

v. 26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

v. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them.

Ch. 2. 18. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone : I will make him an help meet for him.

v. 25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

## TARG. OF PS.-JON.

But the earth was confusion and emptiness, destitute of the sons of men, and bare of all cattle ; and darkness was upon the face of the abyss ; and the spirit of inercies from before the Lord breathed over the surface of the waters.

And the Lord called the light day, and made it that the inhabitants of the world might work therein ; and the darkness he called night, and made it that his creatures should rest therein. And there was evening, and there was morning, one day.

And the Lord formed the firmament, which sustaineth him, with three fingers breadth between the uttermost part of the heaven, and the waters of the ocean : and he made a separation between the waters which are under the firmament, and the waters which are above in the tabernacle of the firmament : and it was so.

And the Lord made the two great lights : and they were equal in their glory twenty and one years, subtracting from these six hundred and seventy parts of an hour. But after this, the moon brought a calumnious accusation against the sun, and she was made less : and he appointed the sun, which was the greater light, to rule in the day, and the moon, which was the lesser light, to rule in the night : with the stars also.

And the Lord said to the angels who ministered before him, who were created on the second day of the creation of the world : Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them bear rule over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl in the air of heaven, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing which creepeth upon the earth.

And the Lord created man in his own likeness : in the image of the Lord created he him, with two hundred and forty-eight members, and three hundred and sixty-five sinews, and clothed him with a skin, and filled him with flesh and blood : male and female in their body created he them.

And the Lord God said : It is not fit that man should sleep by himself : I will make for him a woman, who shall be a support to him, as his counterpart.

And they were both of them wise, the man and his wife : but they did not tarry in their glory.

*The Jerusalem Targum.*—This also paraphrases the five books of Moses, and derives its name from the dialect in which it is composed. It is by no means a connected paraphrase, sometimes omitting whole verses or even chapters ; at other times explaining only a single word of a verse, of which it sometimes gives a twofold interpretation ; and at others, Hebrew words are inserted without any



explanation whatever. In many respects it corresponds with the paraphrase of the Pseudo-Jonathan, whose legendary tales and rabbinical fictions are copiously interspersed throughout, though sometimes abridged and sometimes expanded. It cannot be referred to a date earlier than the seventh or eighth century, nor is any thing known of the author. The following may serve as specimens.

## ENG. VERSION.

Gen. 1. 1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

v. 5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night : and the evening and the morning were the first day.

Ch. 2. 15. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.

v. 18. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone : I will make him an help meet for him.

Ch. 3. 9. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou ?

v. 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

## JERUS. TARG.

In wisdom the Lord created the heaven and the earth.

And evening was, and morning was, in the order of the work of creation, the first day.

And the Lord God took the man, and established him in the garden of Eden, and placed him there that he should be a cultivator of the law, and should keep it.

I will make for him a consort proceeding forth as it were from him.

And the word of the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him : Behold, the world which I have created is laid open before me : darkness and light are open before me, and how didst thou expect the place, in the midst of which thou art, not to be discovered before me ? where is the commandment which I enjoined thee ?

And it shall be when the sons of the woman shall attend to the law and perform the precepts thereof, they shall prepare to wound thee on thy head and shall kill thee : but when the sons of the woman shall forsake the commandments of the law, and shall not perform the precepts thereof, thou shalt be in readiness and shall bite them upon their heel, and shalt afflict them with sickness. Nevertheless, there shall be a remedy for the sons of the woman ; but for thee, O Serpent, there shall not be a remedy : for they shall provide a medicine for one another in the heel, in the end of the heel of days, in the days of King Messiah.

The above mentioned Targums, but more especially those of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, were held by the Jews in nearly as much veneration as their Hebrew Scriptures ; and to give them the greater authority, they traced back their origin to the time of Moses and the ancient prophets ; asserting that Onkelos and Jonathan only restored, by committing to writing, what *they* had received by divine tradition. But this supposition exceeds the usual extravagance of Rabbinical fictions ; for it admits that Moses and the prophets dictated a Chaldee paraphrase to the Jews at a time when they could not possibly have had any knowledge of that language. But while we repudiate these extravagant claims, in regard to the antiquity and authority of the Chaldee paraphrases, and treat as they deserve the idle Rabbinical conceits, with which they are interspersed, we may admit, at the same time, that they are of considerable value in the interpretation of the sacred text. They are undoubtedly the most ancient books, next to the Hebrew Scriptures, possessed by the Jewish nation, and being ex-

tremely literal, they serve to vindicate the original text, as it has come down to us, from the charge of corruption by the Jews for the sake of evading the arguments of Christians. For the same reason they often afford the interpreter important aid in determining the signification of difficult words and phrases, although from the remoteness of their period from the age when the language was vernacular, their testimony cannot have the weight of that of direct and immediate witnesses. But they undoubtedly serve as a channel for conveying down to us the earliest traditionary sense put by the Jews upon many obscure passages of the sacred writings, and correct information on this point is always exceedingly desirable. In addition to this, they often reflect considerable light on the Jewish rites, ceremonies, laws, customs, and usages mentioned or alluded to in both Testaments. But it is in establishing the meaning of particular prophecies relative to the Messiah, that these Targums are pre-eminently useful. For some striking illustrations of this remark, the reader is referred to Prideaux' Connection, vol. 4th. p. 236 (Charlest. ed. 1816), where the whole subject is fully and learnedly treated.—Walton's Polyglott Bible will present the student with all the Targums; and Buxtorf's Biblia Rabbinica will not only give these, but all the distinguished Rabbinic Commentaries, such as those of Kimchi, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, etc. to which should be added his Lexicon Chald. Talmud. Rabbinicum, an invaluable store-house of illustration in every department of Chaldee and Rabbinical literature.

(b.) THE SEPTUAGINT.—This is the title applied to the most ancient and valuable of the Greek versions. It is so called, either from the Jewish account of *seventy-two* persons having been employed to make it, or from its having been ordered, superintended, or sanctioned by the Sanhedrin, or great council of the Jews, which consisted of seventy, or more correctly, of seventy-two persons. Much uncertainty rests upon the *real* history of this version, though its date is usually referred to the second century before the Christian era; but there is no question as to its value; and in so much esteem was it held by the Jews and the early Christians, that it was constantly read in the synagogues and churches. Hence it is uniformly cited by the early fathers, whether Greek or Latin, and from it all the translations into other languages (with the exception of the Syriac), which were approved by the ancient Christian church, were executed, as the Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Gothic, and old Italic or Latin version in use before Jerome; and to this day the Septuagint is exclusively read in the Greek and most other Oriental churches. As a source of interpretation it is invaluable. Desirous of possessing in Greek a faithful representation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and being themselves Jews, the translators retained Hebrew *forms* and *modes* of expression, while the *words* employed were Greek. The language therefore of the Septuagint is a kind of *Hebrew-Greek*, which a native of Athens might have found it difficult to understand. Such as it is, it has operated to give character to the style of the New Testament, and forms in fact one of the most important means of its critical illustration. 'The book,' says Michaelis, 'most necessary to be read and understood by every man who studies the New Testament, is, without doubt, the Septuagint, which alone has been of more service than all the passages from the profane authors collected together. It should be read in the public schools by those who are destined for the church, should form

the subject of a course of lectures at the University, and be the constant companion of an expositor of the New Testament.' This is confirmed by the testimony of Dr. Adam Clarke, who, in speaking of his biblical labours, says, 'About the year 1785 I began to read the Septuagint regularly, in order to acquaint myself more fully with the phraseology of the New Testament. The study of this version served more to expand and illuminate my mind than all the theological works I had ever consulted. I had proceeded but a short way in it, before I was convinced that the prejudices against it were utterly unfounded; and that it was of incalculable advantage towards a proper understanding of the literal sense of the Scripture.' (Comment. vol. I. Gen. Pref.) A marked difference of style in its different parts indicates the version to have been the work not of one but of several translators, and to have been executed at different times. In all, however, the Greek abounds with Hebraisms, and errors are by no means infrequent, particularly in the right construction of the original. This in many instances can only be resolved into absolute incapacity on the score of knowledge and general qualification for the task assumed. Yet very many parts are excellently translated. The first place in the scale of merit is due to the version of the Pentateuch, which far surpasses that of the other books. The translator has for the most part religiously followed the Hebrew text, and has in various instances introduced the most suitable and best chosen expressions. Next to the Pentateuch, for ability and fidelity of execution, ranks the translation of the book of Proverbs, the author of which was well skilled in the two languages. Michaelis is of opinion that of all the books of the Septuagint this is the best; the most ingenious thoughts being clothed in as neat and elegant language as was ever used by a Pythagorean sage, to express his philosophic maxims. The books of Judges, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings, seem to have been translated by one who does not admit more Hebraisms than the other translators, but has several other peculiarities. The Psalms and Prophets, according to Jahn, have been translated by men who were unequal to their task. The version of Jeremiah he considers better than the rest; those of Amos and Ezekiel deserve the next place, and the last must be given to that of Isaiah. The version of Ecclesiastes is remarkable for its being closely literal. In that of Job, additions have been made to those parts of the books which are in prose, while the poetical parts are deficient in scores of passages. The translation of Daniel was so very erroneous, that it was totally rejected by the ancient church, and Theodotion's version substituted instead of it. The Septuagint version, however, which was for a long time supposed to have been lost, was discovered and published at Rome in 1772, from which it appears that its author had but an imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew language.—It may interest a portion of our readers to be informed that the only complete translation of the Septuagint into English was made by a countryman of our own, Charles Thomson, Esq. Secretary to Congress in the time of the Revolutionary war. Though faithfully and creditably executed, yet it is to be regarded rather as a literary curiosity, than as a work of much practical utility to the biblical student. It was printed at Philadelphia, in 1808, in 4 vols. 8 vo, and has now become extremely scarce.—Our quotations from this version, in the body of the work, are so numerous as to render additional specimens, for illustrating its style, unnecessary.—Perhaps the best edition for common use is that of Leipsic by Leander Van Ess.

(c.) **THE VULGATE.**—This is the appellation given to the common Latin translation of the sacred Scriptures. After Christianity extended itself in the West, a Latin version of the Bible naturally became necessary. In the time of Augustine there were several of these; although only one of them was adopted by ecclesiastical authority. This was called *Vulgata, common, popular*, because it was made from the Greek version, also denominated *κοινὴ common*. In modern times this ancient Latin version is often called *Itala (Italic)* in consequence of a passage in Augustine; but the reading there is false, and it should be read *usitata*. This translation was made literally from the Septuagint, and gives, most conscientiously, even all the verbal mistakes of the Greek. There are still extant of it the Psalms, Job, and some of the apocryphal books complete, besides fragments. As the manuscripts of this version had become by degrees very much corrupted, a revision of the Psalter and book of Job was undertaken in A. D. 383, by Jerome in pursuance of an appointment to the work by Damasus bishop of Rome. This is still extant, and called *Psalterium Romanum*, because it was introduced into the Roman diocese. While Jerome was thus employed in the revision of the ancient *Vulgata*, or *Itala*, he ventured to commence also, a new version of his own, out of the original Hebrew; being induced to the undertaking partly by the counsel of his friends, and partly by his own feeling of the necessity of such a work. He began with the Books of Kings, and completed the work, A. D. 405, with Jeremiah. While engaged in this work, he enjoyed the oral instruction of learned Jewish Rabbins in Palestine, and availed himself of all the former Greek versions and of the Hexapla of Origen. His new version surpasses all the preceding in usefulness. The knowledge of Hebrew which Jerome possessed was, for the age, very respectable; and he also made himself master of the Chaldee. His manner of explanation connects itself very closely with that of the Jews; and his choice of Latin expressions is, for the most part, very happy. Still, the production did not meet with the anticipated success and general reception; and especially Augustine and Rufinus wrote against it with virulence, as if a new Bible were about to be introduced. Nevertheless, the new version maintained itself along with the ancient one; and at length, in the seventh century, supplanted it almost entirely.

The Vulgate was the first book ever printed. The first edition is without date or place; the first with a date was printed at Mayence, 1462. At the council of Trent, in 1545, the Vulgate was declared to be the standard version of the Catholic church, and to be of equal authority with the original Scriptures. Since this time, the study of the original text has been regarded by the Catholics as a verging towards heresy. The Vulgate at present consists of different elements; the Psalms and most of the apocryphal books being from the ancient version, or *Itala*, and the rest from the latter Vulgate. The popes have taken great pains to obtain as correct a text of the Vulgate as possible; thus, in 1590, under Sixtus V., appeared the *Editio Sixtina*, which was declared to be the standard for all future editions. But many errors being afterwards discovered in it, the popes purchased up all the copies, so far as possible, and a new standard, the *Editio Clementina*, was published in 1592, which still retains its authority.

The great value of this version, which among Protestants has been underrated from the circumstance of its being so highly regarded by the Catholics, arises from its extreme antiquity. It is a consideration of no small weight that even

the latest part of it was made upwards of fourteen hundred years ago, and is consequently many centuries prior to all the Latin translations now current, none of which can claim a date earlier than the revival of letters in the West. There are two things in this circumstance which powerfully tend to recommend the Vulgate version. (1.) Having been made from manuscripts older than most, perhaps than any now extant, it serves in some degree to supply the place of those manuscripts and to furnish us with the probable means of discovering the genuine ancient readings. For this reason this translation is usually considered as equivalent to a manuscript of the fourth century. (2.) From its having been executed long before those controversies arose which are the foundation of most of the sects now existing, we may rest assured, that, in regard to these, there will be no bias from party zeal to either side of the question; which cannot be said of the translations which have been made since the rise of Protestantism, either by Protestants or Papists.

From the fact of its having been solemnly declared by the Council of Trent, in 1545, as the standard version of the Catholic church, and from some few passages having been produced which seem to favour the abuses and corruptions of that church, the impression became very common that the Vulgate is a Popish Bible, calculated for supporting the Roman Catholic cause. Now although it is certain that besides many barbarisms and solecisms, there are several expressions occurring in this version which vary widely from the original, and *seem* to favour the false dogmas of the papacy, yet it can as little be doubted that in most of these cases there is nothing more than a perversion of the phrase from its primitive and genuine sense, *occasioned by the corruptions which have subsequently and gradually crept into the church*. From the changes incident to all languages, it sometimes happens, that words which expressed the true sense at the time when a translation was made, come afterwards to express a different sense. As institutions change, the meaning of terms applied to them changes also. Consequently, though those terms were once a proper version of the words in the original, they are not so now, having acquired a new, adventitious sense, totally different from that which they formerly conveyed. Thus, for example, it cannot well be questioned that the Latin phrase '*penitentiam agite*,' *do penance*, is in itself as correct a rendering of the Gr. *μετανοέω* as the language admits and implies as much at least as the English word *repent*. But the erroneous notions which early found their way into the church in respect to the virtue of auricular confession and of various public exercises as a testimony of repentance, led at length to a total misapplication of the original phrase, which has been unhappily perpetuated by ecclesiastical usage and authority. The same may be said of several other modes of expression occurring in the Vulgate, which may reasonably be pronounced, on the whole, a good and faithful version, though unequal in style, often lacking in purity and perspicuity, and not seldom erroneous in its renderings. As to the enormously corrupt translation of Heb. 11. 21, which represents Jacob as '*adoring the top of his staff*,' instead of '*worshiping, leaning on the top of his staff*,' the best judges among the Roman Catholics admit that the Latin text is not entire in this place, and that there has been an accidental omission of the preposition through the carelessness of transcribers; for they have not now a writer of any name who infers from the declaration of authenticity, either the infallibility of the translator or the exactness of the copiers.



As to the prejudices which have arisen against this version on the ground of its having been officially *authenticated* by the council of Trent, and made the standard of ultimate appeal, the following remarks of Campbell (Prelim. Dissert. X. part 3. § 6), are well worthy of consideration. 'It is no further back than the sixteenth century since that judgment was given in approbation of this version, the first authoritative declaration made in its favour. Yet the estimation in which it was universally held throughout the western churches, was, to say the least, not inferior, before that period, to what it is at present. And we may say with truth, that though no judicious Protestant will think more favourably of this translation on account of their verdict, neither will he, on this account, think less favourably of it. It was not because this version was peculiarly adapted to the Romish system that it received the sanction of that synod, but because it was the only Bible with which the far greater part of the members had, from their infancy, had the least acquaintance. There were but few in that assembly who understood either Greek or Hebrew: they had heard that the Protestants, the new heretics, as they called them, had frequent recourse to the original, and were beginning to make versions from it; a practice of which their own ignorance of the original made them the more jealous. Their fears being thus alarmed, they were exceedingly anxious to interpose their authority, by the declaration above-mentioned, for preventing new translations being obtruded on the people. They knew what the Vulgate contained, and had been early accustomed to explain it in their own way; but they did not know what might be produced from new translations: therefore, to preoccupy men's minds, and prevent every true son of the church from reading other, especially modern, translations, and from paying any regard to what might be urged from the original, the very indefinite sentence was pronounced in favour of the Vulgate, that in all disputes it should be held for *authentic*, 'ut pro authentica habeatur.' On the whole, therefore, we ought not to consider the version in question, as either better or worse for their verdict. It is not intrinsically calculated to support Romish errors and corruptions, nor ought it to be regarded as the exclusive property of that church. It is the legacy of the earliest ages of Christianity to the universal church, much older than most of the false doctrines and groundless ceremonies which it has been brought to countenance. 'For my own part,' say the writer just cited, 'though it were my sole purpose, in recurring to a version, to refute the corruptions and absurdities of Popery, I should not desire other or better arguments than I am supplied with by that very version which one of their own councils has declared authentic.'

#### § 4. *Modern Versions.—The English.*

Referring to other sources for a more extended historical view of the earlier English translations of the Scriptures, we propose to notice only the present Authorised Version, which it is well known, was undertaken at the command of king James the First, of England, in consequence of several objections having been made, at the conference held in Hampton Court, in 1603, to the Bishop's Bible, which had previously been the one in common use. In pursuance of a resolution adopted the following year, the king gave orders that a new translation should be undertaken, and fifty-four men, pre-eminently distinguished for

piety and learning, were appointed to execute this great work. Before it was commenced, seven of the persons nominated had either died or declined, and only forty-seven actually entered upon it. These were divided into six classes, and each individual translated every book allotted to his division. The whole division then met, and agreed upon the renderings which they would adopt. Their part thus finished was sent to each of the other companies to be again examined, and here the method was for one to read the translation aloud, while the others holding each in his hand some other Bible, either in the original tongues, or in some modern version, diligently compared what they heard with what was before their eyes, interrupting the reader by remarks whenever they deemed it necessary. In this way every precaution was taken to secure a faithful translation, as the whole Bible underwent at least six different revisions by the most learned men in the kingdom. The result of their labours was first published A. D. 1611. It has subsequently been frequently revised with great care, and many marginal additions made, but no changes attempted in the body of the work. It still remains not only the standard Version, but by the unanimous voice of the most competent judges, it is ranked among the very best translations of this or any other book in the world. In point of fidelity, perspicuity, simplicity, energy, and dignity, it doubtless stands unrivalled. It cannot indeed be considered immaculate; but it may be doubted whether, taken as a whole, it could be surpassed by any translation which should now be attempted. A distinguished biblical critic of the last century (Dr. Geddes), in a work written with the express design of impugning the established version, and stating the reasons which had induced him to undertake a new one, is still constrained to acknowledge, that 'if accuracy, fidelity, and the strictest attention to the letter of the text, be supposed to constitute the qualities of an excellent version, this of all versions, must, in general, be accounted the most excellent. Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point seem to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude, and expressed, either in the text or margin, with the greatest precision. Pagninus himself is hardly more literal, and it was well remarked by Robertson, above a hundred years ago, that it may serve for a lexicon of the Hebrew language, as well as for a translation.' (Prosp. of a New Trans. p. 92). Testimonies to the same effect, and equally decided, from the most competent sources, might be accumulated almost without number in favour of the excellence of our received translation, to all which we are disposed heartily to subscribe. At the same time, it will not be considered as revoking the ample concession thus made, if we advert to some undeniable defects in this version. This we do, not for the purpose of weakening the confidence or lessening the pleasure with which the vernacular Scriptures are studied, but simply as a matter of impartial justice. And in noticing these defects we shall pass by all those which arose necessarily from the age and the circumstances in which the translation was made. In the nature of the case, the translators were precluded access to various sources of biblical criticism and elucidation which are abundantly enjoyed at the present day. We have a far more extended biblical apparatus than they had or could have at the period in which they lived. The publication of polyglots, the collation of ancient manuscripts and versions, the multiplication of grammars, lexicons, concordances, and critical dissertations, the enlarged comparison of the affinities of the Oriental dialects, the researches of trav-

ellers into the geography, manners, customs, natural history, &c. of the East, the more accurate tables of chronology, coins, weights, and measures, and the generally more advanced state of scientific criticism; have all tended to enrich us with facilities for performing such a work, to which our fathers were strangers. But not to dwell upon these considerations, nor upon the embarrassments thrown in their way by the arbitrary restrictions, growing out of the prejudice, the pedantry, or the caprice of the monarch by whom they were employed, the received version is marred by blemishes of another kind for which we cannot find the same apology. Of these, by far the most prominent is a want of *uniformity* in the mode of rendering, both in regard to single words and to phrases. This, we admit, was in some degree to be expected, partly from the magnitude of the work itself, and partly from the number of persons employed in it; nor should we perhaps dissent from what the translators have said in justification of their not tying themselves down to an absolute 'identity of phrasing.' As they remark, it would perhaps 'savor more of curiosity than wisdom' that translators should feel bound in every case to render, for example, the same Hebrew or Greek words, by *purpose*, never by *intent*; always by *think*, never by *suppose*; always by *journeying*, never by *travelling*; always by *pain*, never by *ache*; always by *joy*, never by *gladness*, &c. Yet it is obvious that a more scrupulous exactness may justly be required in a translation of the Scriptures, than in any other translation, and we doubt not that the instances adduced below will show that they have actually transcended all reasonable allowance on this score, not only often varying the terms unnecessarily, but so as to deprive the unlearned reader of the signal advantages to be gained in the study of the Bible from comparing terms and phrases strictly parallel. The justice of our criticism will be more evident from the subjoined specimens.

## 1.—WORDS.

צָרָרָה	rend.	{ diadem, Job. 29. 14. hood, Is. 3. 23. mitre, Zech. 3. 5.	חֲבֵר	{ locust, 2 Chron. 7. 13. grasshopper, Lev. 11. 22.
מִעוֹנָה	"	{ dwelling-place, Ps. 76. 2. habitation, Jer. 21. 13. den, Ps. 104. 22.	מִזְוָה	" { lintel, 1 Kings. 6. 31. door-post, Deut. 6. 9.
רֹאשׁ	"	{ wormwood, Deut. 29. 18. hemlock, Hos. 10. 4.	סֵפֶר	" { to wail, Mic. 1. 8. to mourn, Zech. 12. 10. to lament, Jer. 4. 8.
רֵעֵנָה	"	{ owl, Job. 30. 29. ostrich, Lam. 4. 3.	שָׁלָף	" { corinorant, Deut. 14. 17. pelican, Lev. 11. 17.
חֲרוֹץ	"	{ nettles, Job. 30. 7. thorns, Prov. 24. 31.	מִצְוֶה	" { fort, 2 Sam. 5. 9. hold, 1 Sam. 24. 4. strong-hold, 2 Sam. 5. 7. castle, 1 Chron. 11. 5. munition, Is. 29. 7. bulwark, Eccl. 9. 14. fortress, Ps. 18. 2.
שְׂאוֹל	"	{ hell, Ps. 55. 15. the grave, Ps. 141. 7.	גוֹיִם	" { nations, Gen. 14. 1. gentiles, Judg. 4. 2. heathens, Jer. 10. 2.
חֹק	"	{ law, Ps. 94. 20. statute, Ex. 15. 25. decree, Job. 28. 26. ordinance, Is. 24. 5.	כְּלִי	" { vessels, Is. 52. 11. furniture, Gen. 31. 34. instruments, 2 Chron. 34. 12 stuff, Gen. 31. 37. armor, Is. 39. 2. weapons, Gen. 27. 3.
שָׁרָיו	"	{ coat of mail, 1 Sam. 13. 38. habergeon, 2 Chron. 26. 14. breast-plate, Is. 59. 18.		
מָגֵן	"	{ shield, Ps. 35. 2. buckler, 2 Sam. 22. 31.		



מַעֲיָן	"	{ spring, Ps. 87. 7. fountain, Gen. 7. 11.	תְּבַנִּית	"	{ pattern, Ex. 25. 9. likeness, Ezek. 8. 3. form, Ezek. 8. 10. similitude, Deut. 4. 16. figure, Is. 44. 13.
שָׁמַיִם	"	{ heaven, Deut. 4. 11. heavens, Dan. 4. 26. air, 2 Sam. 21. 10.	μαρτυρειν	"	{ to testify, John. 15. 26. to bear witness, John 15. 27.
πατρια	"	{ family, Eph. 3. 15. lineage, Luke, 2. 4. kindred, Acts, 3. 25.	διαίρεσεις	"	{ diversities, 1 Cor. 12. 4. differences, 1 Cor. 12. 5.
κρατιστος	"	{ most excellent, Luke, 1. 3. most noble, Acts, 24. 3.	μενω	"	{ to abide, Luke, 24. 29. to tarry, Ibid.
ωαστατω	"	{ turn upside down, Acts, 17. 6. make an uproar, Acts, 21. 38. trouble, Gal. 5. 12.	ελεω	"	{ to pity, Mat. 18. 30. to have compassion, Ibid.
καιροις ιδιοις	"	{ in due time, 1 Tim. 2. 6. in his times, 1 Tim. 6. 15. in due times, Tit. 1. 3.	αιωνιος	"	{ everlasting, Mat. 25. 4. eternal, Ibid.
αρχιτρικλινης	"	{ ruler of the feast, John 2. 8. governor of the feast, Ibid.	κοπος	"	{ weariness, 2 Cor. 11. 27. labor, 1 Thes. 2. 9.
παρακλησις	"	{ comfort, 2 Cor. 1. 4. consolation, 2 Cor. 1. 5.	μοχθος	"	{ painfulness, 2 Cor. 11. 27. travail, 1 Thes. 2. 9.

## 2.—PHRASES.

גִּאּוֹן עֲזָא	rend.	{ the pride of her power, Ezek. 30. 6. the pomp of her strength, Ezek. 30. 18.
שׁוּם עֵינֶיךָ עַל	"	{ set eyes upon, Gen. 44. 21. look well to, Jer. 39. 12.
טוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ	"	{ good in the eyes of, Gen. 41. 37. it pleaseth thee, Gen. 20. 15. it liketh him best, Deut. 23. 16.
רַמְיָי שְׁנֵי הַיָּרֵךְ	"	{ how old art thou? Gen. 47. 8. the days of the years of my life, Gen. 47. 9. the whole age of, Gen. 47. 28.
נָשָׂא אֶת־יָדְךָ	"	{ to swear, Ex. 6. 8. Num. 14. 30. to lift up the hand, Deut. 32. 40.
ἐπὶ ἡμῶν ἐστίν	"	{ is on our part, Mark, 9. 40. is for us, Luke, 9. 50.
τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον	"	{ the spirit is willing, Mat. 26. 41. the spirit is ready, Mark, 14. 38.
ἐλογίσθη εἰς δικαιοσύνην	"	{ counted for righteousness, Rom. 4. 3. accounted for righteousness, Gal. 3. 6. imputed for righteousness, Jas. 2. 23.
εἰ εἰσελεύσονται, &c.	"	{ they shall not enter into my rest, Heb. 3. 11. if they shall enter into my rest, Heb. 4. 5.

But there are no phrases, in the rendering of which the translators have shewn more diversity than in those in which the words בֶּן *ben*, *son*, and אִישׁ *ish*, *man*, make a part. The former of these, which not only signifies a son, but also a descendant of any kind, has in the Oriental dialects a very wide acceptance, and is applied not only to the offspring of the animal creation, but also to productions of every sort; and what is still more remarkable, to consequential or concomitant relations. Thus an arrow is called the son of the bow; the morning-star, the son of the morning; threshed-out corn, the son of the floor; and anointed persons, the sons of oil. In rendering such phrases our translators have, for the most part, softened the Hebraism, but after no uniform manner.

*Sons of Belial* is surely not more intelligible to an English reader than *sons of oil*, and much less so than *sons of valour*, *sons of righteousness*, *sons of iniquity*; yet, while they retain the first Hebraism, with all its original harshness, and partly in its original form, they mollify the three last into *valiant men*, *righteous men*, *wicked men*. But even in regard to the first they are not consistent; for if once they admitted the word *Belial*, they should have retained it throughout, and said *a thing of Belial*, *a heart of Belial*, *a witness of Belial*, *the floods of Belial*; which, however, they render *an evil disease*, *a wicked heart*, *an ungodly witness*, *the floods of ungodliness*. Nay, they have once or twice translated *a man of Belial*, *a wicked man*.

Many other instances of this variety of phrasing might be adduced, but enough has been said to shew that our translators were not guided by any uniform rule or fixed principle, especially in rendering the Hebraisms of the Bible; and, moreover, that this want of uniformity must often be productive of great inconvenience to the reader.

On the whole, however, if we except the fault now adverted to, the abatements to be made from the general excellence of the established version are extremely trivial, and whatever defects may be pointed out, they are chargeable rather upon the age and the circumstances in which it was made than upon the translators themselves, and in our estimate it is but reasonable that the faults of a translation should be viewed as far as possible distinct from the faults of the translators. It is indeed possible that occasional instances of wrong or inadequate rendering may be specified, that grammatical propriety may be sometimes slightly violated, that Greek and Hebrew idioms may not always be the most happily transfused into English, that modes of expression lacking in delicacy, or dignity, or perspicuity, may here and there occur, but they are few and far between, and a thousand-fold outweighed by the evident study of *rigid fidelity* every where exhibited. In attempting, therefore, to specify, as we now propose to do, some particulars in which our English version is capable of amendment, we are doing nothing which really reflects upon the course adopted, in respect to these points, by the translators, unless it can be supposed to detract from them that they did not foresee the changes which in after times would come upon their native tongue. They employed such words as the usage of their times suggested and sanctioned. The same reasons which made them adopt those words *then* would, if they were *now* alive, and revising their own work, induce them to substitute others in their stead. We would be understood, then, merely as intimating what is in itself *desirable*, in view of the progress of language and society, rather than what *we should deem it expedient to have undertaken*.

While the changes effected in the lapse of two or three centuries in our habits of thought and modes of expression do doubtless render certain emendations *intrinsically* a desideratum, yet when it comes to the question of actually innovating upon the established text, under whatever plea, we at once plant ourselves on the ground of strict adherence to its every letter. The advantages of retaining incorrupt a standard harmoniously accepted by so large a portion of Christendom, are so signally great, and the evils which would inevitably result from its allowed invasion so manifold and vast, that we trust the day is far, far distant when the first step shall be taken toward supplanting this time-hallowed version in the estimation of the millions by whom it is now so affectionately

cherished. Incomparably better will it be that any little improvements in the way of explication, modernized diction, euphemism, &c. should be suggested in critical or popular comments, in biblical introductions, in sermons, in fact *any how*, rather than in the form of direct alterations of a text, as to which our instinctive prayer is 'Esto perpetua.'

The following list of *obsolete* or *antiquated* terms, it is proper to advise the reader, is taken from the *earlier* copies of King James' Version, and contains a considerable number which have been since altered, but by whom, or upon what authority, does not appear. Recurrence to the passages indicated will shew, however, that several of them do not now stand in our current editions, but have given place to their more modern equivalents ranged in the parallel column. In some cases, moreover, it is not the *word*, but the *sense*, which has become antiquated.

## 1.—SINGLE TERMS.

Advisement	counsel, 1 Chron. 12. 19.	Thief	robber, Mat. 27. 38, 44.
Afore	before, 2 Kings, 20. 4.	Worship	honor, civil respect. Lu. 14. 10.
Albeit	although, Ezek. 13. 7.	Meat	food, Mat. 3. 4.
Aliant	alien, Job, 19. 15.	Cunning	skilful, Ex. 38. 23.
Anon	soon, Mat. 13. 20.	Honest	decent, becoming, 2 Cor. 8. 21
Bestead	reduced to straits, Is. 8. 21.	More	greater, Acts, 19. 32.
Bewray	expose, Is. 16. 3.	Quick	living, Acts, 10. 42.
Blains	blisters, Ex. 9. 9.	Stablish	establish, 1 Pet. 5. 10.
Beast	living creature, Rev. 4. 6, 7.	Prevent	go before, 1 Thes. 4. 15.
Chaws	jaws, Ezek. 29. 4.	Ensue	pursue, 1 Pet. 3. 11.
Cracknels	cakes, 1 Kings, 14. 3.	Provoke	excite, Heb. 10. 24.
Coast	border, limit, Deut. 19. 8	Entreat	treat, Luke, 20. 11.
Chapter	capital, Ex. 36. 38.	Instantly	earnestly, Luke, 7. 4.
Daysman	umpire, Job, 9. 33.	Hitherto	thus far, Job, 38. 11.
Deal	part, Ex. 29. 40.	Ravin	prey, Gen. 49. 27.
Fet	fetches, Acts, 28. 13.	Bruit	rumor, Nah. 3. 19.
Fray	frighten, Zech. 1. 21.	Marvel	wonder, Eccl. 5. 8.
Fenced	fortified, Deut. 3. 5.	Eschew	avoid, Job, 2. 3.
Habergeon	armor, breastplate, Ex. 23. 32.	To skill	to be knowing in, 1 Kings, 5. 6.
Holpen	helped, Ps. 38. 8.	Wax	become, Is. 51. 6.
Hosen	stockings, Dan. 3. 21.	Lack	to be wanting, Gen. 18. 28.
Hough	hamstring, Josh. 11. 9.	Trow	think, Luke, 17. 9.
Kerchiefs	caps, Ezek. 13. 18.	Twain	two, 1 Sam. 18. 21.
Kine	cows, Gen. 32. 15.	Clean	entirely, Josh. 3. 17.
Lad	youth, Gen. 21. 12.	Sore	severe, very much, <i>occ. ofl.</i>
Leasing	lies, Ps. 4. 2.	Mo	more, Deut. 1. 11.
Leese	lose, 1 Kings, 18. 5.	Straitly	strictly, Gen. 43. 7.
List, listed	please, Mat. 17. 12.	Dureth	endureth, Mat. 13. 21.
Let	hinder, Rom. 1. 13.	Camp	encamp, Is. 29. 3.
Magnifical	stately, 1 Chron. 22. 5.	Minish	diminish, Ps. 107. 39.
Marishes	marshes, Ezek. 47. 11.	An hungered	hungry, Mat. 4. 2.
Mufflers	thin veils, Is. 3. 19.	Garner	granary, Mat. 3. 12.
Munition	fortification, Nah. 3. 1.	Sith	since, Jer. 15. 7.
Molten	melted, Ezek. 24. 11.	Ensample	sample, 1 Cor. 10. 11.
Peeled	smoothed, Is. 18. 2.	Mids	midst, Luke, 23. 45.
Poll and polled	cut the hair off, Ezek. 14. 20	Graffed	grafted, Rom. 11. 17—24.
Purtenance	inward parts, Ex. 12. 9.	Backslidings	deserting, Jer. 2. 19.
Carriage	baggage, 1 Sam. 17. 22.	Untó	for, John, 15. 7.
Conversation	behavior, 1 Tim. 4. 12, &c.	Of	by, Mat. 1. 18.

Of	from, Mat. 7. 16.	Servitor	servant, 2 Kings, 4. 43.
Passion	suffering, Acts, 1. 3.	Silverlings	pieces of silver, Is. 7. 23.
Oweth	owneth, Acts, 21. 11.	Sod, sodden	boil, Gen. 25. 29.
Harness	armor, Ex. 13. 18.	Stature	height, Num. 13. 32.
Ear	till, 1 Sam. 8. 12.	Swollen	swelled, Acts, 28. 6.
Wist, wit, wot	know, Ex. 16. 15.	Tablets	tippets, Ex. 35. 22.
Tache	button, Ex. 26. 6.	Terrises	balustrades, 2 Chron. 9. 11.
Tale	number, Ex. 5. 8.	Unwittingly	unawares, Lev. 22. 14.
Straw	scatter, Mat. 25. 26.	Wastness	wasting, Zeph. 1. 15.
Seethe	boil, 2 Kings, 4. 38.	Wench	girl, 2 Sam. 17. 17.

## 2.—PHRASES.

Good man of the house	master of the family, Mat. 20. 11.
Uppermost rooms	chief places at table, Mat. 23. 6.
Hunger-bitten	weakened with hunger, Job, 18. 12.
Take no thought	be not anxious, Mat. 6. 25.
Laughed to scorn	derided, Mat. 9. 24.
Cast the same in his teeth	reproved him, Mat. 27. 44.
Chode with	quarrelled or disputed with, Gen. 31. 36.
We do you to wit	we inform you, 2 Cor. 8. 1.
It repented him	he repented, Gen. 6. 6.
He repented himself	the same, Mat. 27. 3.
Stricken in age	advanced in age, Gen. 18. 11.
Know any thing by myself	know any thing against myself, 1 Cor. 4. 4.
Sat at meat	sat at table, Mat. 9. 10.

*Learned Terms.*—In the following list of learned terms retained in the common version, it is readily admitted that several may be specified which through long use have become both familiar and intelligible, and that in regard to others it would be difficult to express their meaning well, without a tedious or clumsy circumlocution. But a simple diction is more accordant with the general style of the version, which is remarkable for its use of pure English words in preference to those of Roman origin. Thus the translators almost invariably adopt *keep back for suppress; call upon for invoke; bow down for incline; lift up for exalt; stretch out for extend; put out for extinguish; cry out for exclaim; put away for divorce; put asunder for separate; cut off for reject; let go for dismiss*, &c. We cite the following instances therefore, rather as exceptions to the general practice of the translators.

Tetrarch	Roman Governor.	Omnipotent	almighty.
Synagogue	assembly.	Illuminated	enlightened.
Proselyte	convert.	Delectable	delightful.
Centurion	Roman officer.	Immutable	unchangeable.
Quarternion	party of four soldiers.	Celestial	heavenly.
Legion	body of Roman soldiers.	Terrestrial	earthly.
Easter	passover.	Partition	division.
Scribe	writer.	Divination	foretelling.
Infidel	unbeliever.	Diversity	variety.
Matrix	womb.	Importunity	earnest entreaty.
Occurrent	incident.	Inquisition	inquiry.
Vocation	calling.	Prognosticator	foreteller.
Consolation	comfort.	Ambassage	embassy.
Remission	forgiveness.	Cogitation	thought.

## THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

### CHAPTER I.

**I**N the <sup>a</sup>beginning God <sup>b</sup>created the heaven and the earth.

<sup>a</sup> John, 1. 1, 2. Heb. 1. 10. <sup>b</sup> Ps. 8. 3. & 33. 6. & 89. 11, 12. & 102. 25. & 136. 5. & 146. 6. Is. 44. 24. Jer. 10. 12. & 51. 15. Zech. 12. 1. Acts 14.

### CHAPTER I.

The general scope of the first chapter of Genesis is too obvious to stand in need of comment. It is the record of the creation of the heavens and the earth—a work which we learn was not effected by a single instantaneous act of Omnipotence, but performed by gradual stages through the space of six successive periods of time, that begin to be reckoned from the first emergence of light from the previous darkness by which the globe was encompassed. Of the interval between the original production of the matter of which the earth was formed, and the formation of light, nothing is said, because the objects for which a revelation is given to man did not require any thing to be said. Nor does it appear that it entered into the design of the sacred writer, or rather of the Holy Spirit by whom he was moved, to give an account of the *whole creation*, but merely of that which it more immediately concerns us to know. The Scriptures were not written to gratify curiosity, not even all *laudable* curiosity, but to nourish faith and govern human conduct. Accordingly, they afford no answer to a multitude of questions that might be asked respecting the *when* and the *why* and the *how* of the divine operations. A simple *it was so*, is the sum total of the information given on a great variety of the most interesting subjects which can occupy the mind of man. An introduction of majestic sublimity ushered in without apo-

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep: <sup>c</sup> and

15. & 17. 24. Col. 1. 16, 17. Heb. 11. 3. Rev. 4. 11. & 10. 6. <sup>c</sup> Ps. 33. 6. Is. 40. 13, 14.

logy or preamble, or any of the formalities both common and proper in histories composed by men, acquaints us with the naked fact, that 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' Nothing is said by way of assertion or proof even of the fundamental truth of the *being of a God*. This is a truth taken for granted; as if the idea of its being questioned was an idea which never entered into the writer's mind; or as if it were designed to teach us that those who denied the existence of an intelligent First Cause, were rather to be rebuked than reasoned with. But although the Mosaic history of the creation does not embrace all the points on which it might have been supposed, *a priori*, that a divine revelation would have instructed us, yet it is to be borne in mind, that *it is true as far as it goes*, and in no way inconsistent, when rightly explained, with any subsequent discoveries which have been made in the structure of the globe, or the laws of the planetary system. As the Bible and the universe have one and the same Author, we may be sure that the truths of the one can never militate with those of the other. That they may in some cases *apparently* come in collision, may be admitted; but time, and patient research, and a wider collation of facts, will not fail in the end to bring nature and revelation into the most perfect harmony with each other.

1. *In the beginning.* That is, in the be-



ginning, or at the outset, of the work of creation here recorded. Whether this were absolutely at the beginning of time, or even of the existence of the *matter* of the heavens and the earth, cannot be determined from the phraseology. The design of the sacred writer seems to be simply to carry back the mind of the reader to the period previous to which this wonderful fabric *in its present state* did not exist. He does this in order to convey, upon the highest possible authority, the assurance, that the universe, as it now appears, had both a beginning and a creator; that it did not spring into being without a cause, nor, as some of the ancient philosophers imagined, exist from eternity. This was all that his leading scope required him to say in this connection; and all that the words in a fair interpretation import. Taken along with the context, the drift of the whole verse seems to be to give, in a brief and compendious form, a *summary* of the work of creation; which is more fully detailed in its various particulars in the account of the six days following. Such general statements not unfrequently occur in the sacred writers, as a preface to more expanded details that follow. Thus, it is said in general terms, v. 27, that 'God created man in his own image; male and female created he them;' whereas the particulars of their creation are given at full length, ch. 2. 7, 18, 25. Sometimes they stand at the close of a chapter or paragraph, as a concise summing up of the previous statement. Thus after the particular recital of the various work of the tabernacle, Ex. 39. 42, it is said, 'According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work.' In like manner, in speaking of the erection of a common edifice, it might be said, 'such an architect built this house;' and then, describing the process more fully, 'he first laid the foundation, then reared the walls, then put on the roof, and finally added the ornaments.' It is precisely on this plan that we suppose the Mosaic narrative here con-

structed; the first verse condensing in limited compass the *sum* of the several particulars afterwards specified. That it was not the *finished* 'heavens' and 'earth' that were in the first instant of creation spoken into existence, is evident from what follows, in which we learn that these names were not bestowed, and consequently, that there were no grounds for their bestowment, before the second and third days.—**¶ God.** The original for 'God,' אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*, is a very remarkable word, occurring for the most part in the plural, and yet usually connected, as here, with a verb in the singular. The evidence, however, drawn by some from this fact in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, is not in itself conclusive, as a similar idiom in Hebrew in respect to words denoting *rank, authority, eminence, majesty*, is by no means uncommon. See Ex. 21. 4. Is. 19. 4. Mal. 1. 6. Ps. 58. 11. The use of the plural in such cases seems to be merely for the purpose of giving to the word greater *fulness, emphasis, and intensity* of meaning. The rendering of the name in the singular in other languages, however, has the unequivocal sanction of holy writ; for the New Testament writers, copying the Septuagint, uniformly translate it Θεός *God*, instead of Θεοί *Gods*, an example which has been properly followed by all the versions ancient and modern, as no other language can in this particular reach the propriety and exactness of the Hebrew. The English word 'God,' Germ. 'Gott,' is of Anglo-Saxon origin, supposed to be a contraction of 'good;' *God* and *good* being justly considered as correlative terms. It may be remarked, that the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*, is sometimes applied to *angels*, Ps. 8. 5, and sometimes to *magistrates*, and *distinguished personages*, Ex. 21. 6; in which last case, it is rendered by 'judges.'—**¶ Created.** It is a matter rather of rational inference than of express revelation, that the material universe was *created out of nothing*. Yet

it is such an inference as cannot be resisted without doing violence to the fundamental laws of human belief. For as every material existence is, from the very constitution of our minds, conceived of as an *effect*, the production of some adequate *cause*, it necessarily supposes a previous state of *non-existence* or *nothing*, from which it passed into *being*. But it does not appear that the original word here employed (ברא) was designed to convey precisely this idea, or that there is any word in any language which does. The leading import of the present term is two-fold:—(1.) *The production or effectuation of something new, rare, and wonderful*; the bringing something to pass in a striking and marvellous manner, as Num. 16. 30, 'But if the Lord make a new thing (Heb. בריאה יברא create a creation or a creature), and the earth swallow them up,' &c. Jer. 31. 22, 'For the Lord hath created a new thing (Heb. ברא חדש) in the earth, A woman shall compass a man,' (2.) *The act of renovating, re-modelling, or re-constituting something already in existence*. In this sense it is used almost exclusively in the Scriptures in reference to the effects of the divine influence in the moral or spiritual creation, i. e. regeneration and sanctification. Thus, Ps. 51. 10, 'Create (ברא) in me a clean heart, O God,' explained by the parallel clause, 'Renew a right spirit within me.' Is. 65. 17, 'Behold, I create (בררא) new heavens and a new earth,' i. e. I re-create the heavens and the earth; I establish a new order of things; I effect a stupendous revolution moral and political. The corresponding Gr. term (κτίσις) with its derivatives, is unequivocally used in the same sense, as Eph. 2. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created (κτισθεντες) in Christ Jesus.' 2 Cor. 5. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (καινὴ κτίσις).' In all these cases the act implied by the word is exerted upon a pre-existing substance, and cannot therefore strictly signify to

create out of nothing. And as in no other instance throughout the sacred writings, if this passage be excepted, has the word necessarily or naturally this signification, we perceive no sufficient ground for so interpreting it here; for the *usus loquendi*, or prevailing usage, is the only sure guide in determining the import of words. Allowing then that the materials, the primordial elements, of the heavens and the earth, were brought into existence at an indefinitely prior period, the term 'create' may be understood as expressing the action of the Almighty Agent upon the rude chaotic mass, in moulding and arranging it into its present comely order and grand and beautiful forms. This view of the writer's language is undoubtedly more consistent with ascertained geological facts, than any other, and it is certainly desirable to harmonize, as far as possible, the truths of revelation with those of natural science. —¶ The heaven. Heb. שמים shamayim. The root of the original word, which is lost in Hebrew, is supposed to be preserved in the Arabic Shamaa, to be high, lofty, sublime. As to its true import in this place, we cannot doubt that we are bound to be governed by the sense assigned to it by the sacred writer himself, in v. 8, where we are expressly told, that God 'called the firmament, heaven,' as he did 'the dry land, earth.' The 'heaven' and the 'earth,' therefore, which were now created, we take to be precisely the same heaven and earth which are subsequently described, v. 6-10, and that these are necessarily confined to our planet and its surrounding atmosphere, we shall endeavor to show in our notes on those verses. This view of the subject, if we mistake not, effectually precludes the idea that by heaven and earth in the first verse, is meant the matter of which they were composed, and which, it is supposed, is here said to be first brought into existence out of nothing. Such an hypothesis, we think, will be found to introduce inex-

tricable confusion into the narrative. See on v. 8.—¶ *The earth.* Heb. אֶרֶץ. By 'earth' here is to be understood that portion of the globe which was afterwards, when reclaimed from the water, so called in contradistinction from 'seas,' v. 10. Seldom if ever are we to affix to the term 'earth' in the Scriptures the idea of a planetary sphere, or component part of the solar system; a sense of the word which is the result of astronomical discoveries made long since the volume of inspiration was penned, and which of course it could not be expected to recognise, though it contains nothing inconsistent with them. The biblical sense of 'earth,' is for the most part merely a *portion of the earth's surface, a country, a territory*, though sometimes used metaphorically for the inhabitants of the earth. See on Gen. 12. 1.

2. *Without form and void.* Heb. בְּרָאָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ *tohu vavohu*. Chal. 'Desert and empty.' Gr. 'Invisible and incomposed,' i. e. chaotic. The original words, though rendered adjectively, are real substantives, employed in several cases where the object of the writer is to express in significant terms the idea of *dreariness* and *desolation*, particularly as the effect of divine judgments in laying waste a country or city. See to this purpose, Jer. 4. 23. Ps. 107. 40. In Is. 34. 11, they are rendered *confusion* and *emptiness*. They are in fact the very words which a Hebrew writer would naturally use to express the wreck and ruins of a former world, if such an one were supposed to have existed. In the present connection they refer wholly to the surface of the earth, and imply a desolate, dreary, hideous waste, without order or beauty, inhabitant or furniture. This verse is probably to be considered as descriptive of the state and appearance of the globe *antecedent* to the commencement of the six days' work, so that in the order of sense, it is in reality prior to the first. As there is no distinction of past, perfect, and pluperfect tenses in Hebrew, we are to be

governed solely by the exigency of the place in rendering any particular word in one of these tenses or the other. 'Was,' therefore, in this instance, we hold to be more correctly translated by 'had been,' or perhaps 'had become,' i. e. in consequence of changes to which it had been subject in the lapse of ages long prior to the period now alluded to. Vatablus suggests that the true clew to the connection is to inclose the whole of the verse in a parenthesis, rendering it, '*For the earth,*' &c. It has indeed been generally supposed that it describes the rude and chaotic state which ensued immediately upon the creating command. But this we think is contrary to the express declaration of Jehovah himself, Is. 45. 18, 'For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself, that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, *he created it not in vain* (Heb. לֹא תוֹהוּ בְּרָאָה *he created it not (Tohu) desolate*);' i. e. the action denoted by the word בְּרָאָה *created*, did not result in the state denoted by the word תוֹהוּ *desolate*, but the reverse—'he formed it to be inhabited (יִצְרָה לְשִׁבְתָּה)'. It *was* in this desolate and formless state when the process of creation commenced. The words 'without form and void,' therefore, are not to be considered as strictly epithets of the earth *as such*, but as descriptive of that chaotic state which preceded the 'earth,' and which ceased simultaneously with the development of the earth out of it. Thus we may say of a statue, 'This statue *was* a block of marble,' but it can never be properly said, 'This statue *is* a block of marble,' because the two states of the material are opposite to each other, and the one ceases when the other begins. The state of the globe therefore designated by the terms 'without form and void,' continued till the second day, and to that part of the third, in which the dry land liberated from the dominion of the water, obtained the name 'earth,' v. 9, 10. As to the condition or history of our planet, during the ages that may have interven-



ed prior to this period, no information is given, because it did not fall within the scope of the objects of a divine revelation. 'The Bible instructs us that man, and other living things, have been placed but a few years upon the earth; and the physical monuments of the world bear witness to the same truth. If the astronomer tells us of myriads of worlds not spoken of in the sacred records, the geologist in like manner proves (not by arguments from analogy, but by the incontrovertible evidence of physical phenomena), that there were former conditions of our planet, separated from each other by vast intervals of time, during which man and the other creatures of his own date, had not been called into being. Periods such as these belong not, therefore, to the moral history of our race, and come neither within the letter nor the spirit of revelation. Between the first creation of the earth, and that day in which it pleased God to place man upon it, who shall dare to define the interval? On this question Scripture is silent, but that silence destroys not the meaning of those physical monuments of his power that God has put before our eyes, giving us at the same time faculties whereby we may interpret them, and comprehend their meaning.' *Sedgwick*.—¶ *Darkness*. The mere privation of light, and therefore not an object of creation.—¶ *The deep*. Heb. תְּהוֹם *tehom*. That is, the vast mass of waters circumfused around the globe, with which it was originally 'covered as with a garment,' Ps. 104. 6, and which were not yet 'laid up in store-houses,' i.e., distributed into seas, oceans, lakes, and subterraneous receptacles. Ps. 33. 7. The original word is generally rendered in the Gr. version by ἀβυσσος *abyss*, a term occasionally used in reference to deep subterranean caverns and recesses in the earth, in which the presence of water is not implied. But that sense is evidently inadmissible here.—¶ *Spirit of God*. Heb. רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים. The ori-

ginal רוּחַ *ruahh* is the proper term for *breath* or *wind*, whence some commentators take it to mean a '*wind of God*,' i. e. a *mighty wind*, which was now made to agitate the chaotic mass. This, however, is less likely, as it does not appear that the atmosphere was now created, nor is the idea compatible with the kind of motion indicated by the epithet that follows. Others therefore with more probability interpret it of the *divine agency, efficiency, or energy*, the undoubted sense of the phrase in numerous other instances, as particularly Job 26. 13, 'By his *spirit* he hath garnished the heavens; his hand has formed the crooked serpent.' Ps. 33. 6, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the *breath of his mouth* (בְּרוּחַ פִּי). Ps. 104. 30, 'Thou sendest forth *thy spirit*, (רוּחְךָ) they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth;' in all which cases the predominant idea is that of *power*. That the phrase is here to be understood in allusion to a personal distinction in the Godhead, cannot, we think, be positively affirmed.—

¶ *Moved upon the face of the waters*. Heb. מְרַחֶפֶת *was moving*, or rather *was hovering*. The original implies a gentle waving or fluttering motion, like that of a bird over its young. Thus, Deut. 32. 11, 'As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth (יִרְחֹף) over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings,' &c. Whatever may have been the nature or effect of the operation described in these words, it appears to have been put forth upon the terrestrial mass in its chaotic state *previous* to the creative work of the six days. For this reason this clause ought not to be separated by a period from the preceding, as is the case in some editions of the English Bible, since the whole verse really forms a continuous and closely connected narrative.

3. *And God said*. That is, *willed*; efficaciously purposed; decreed within himself—a very frequent sense of the

the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3<sup>d</sup> And God said, 'Let there be light: and there was light.'

d Ps. 33. 9.

word 'say' in the Scriptures. It is not to be supposed that there was any vocal utterance. Indeed, throughout the narrative the phrase, 'he said,' is simply equivalent to 'he willed.' 'God's speaking is his willing, and his willing is his doing.' Bp. Hall.—¶ *Let there be light.* The sacred writer having in v. 2, described the condition of the globe in its pre-existing chaotic state, now enters upon the details of that stupendous process by which the whole was reduced into order, and converted into the grand fabric of the heavens and the earth as they now appear. The first step was giving visibility to light, an element emanating, as we shall shortly see, from the sun, and diffused in the regions of space around the exterior surface of the globe, but not at this time penetrating the dense mass of aqueous and aerial fluids by which it was surrounded. To this the Psalmist alludes, Ps. 104. 2, 'Who coverest (thyself) with light as with a garment,' where, from a misconception of the writer's scope, our translators have inserted 'thyself,' instead of 'the earth,' the proper term; as it will be evident upon inspection, that the Psalmist's drift is to recite the successive gradations in the work of creation, and from thence to derive matter of praise to the Great Architect. So also in the moral creation, there is first a 'true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world,' but as the light of the sun did not at first pierce through the superficial gloom that covered the globe, so the spiritual light 'shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not,' i. e. admitteth it not; but as on the fourth day every interposing medium to the light of the natural sun was removed, and that bright lumi-

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

e 2 Cor. 4. 6.

nary shone forth in unclouded lustre, so by a renewed operation of divine power upon the benighted soul, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shineth in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.'

4. *That it was good.* Good, as answering the end for which it was made, and good in the sense of pleasant, grateful, refreshing. Thus Eccles. 11. 7, 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant (Heb. good) thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.'—¶ *Divided the light from the darkness.* Heb. 'separated between the light and between the darkness.' This must mean something more than 'distinguished' between light and darkness, as this was effectually done by the bare creation of light, an element in its own nature directly opposite to, and therefore perfectly distinguished from, darkness. The 'division' of the light from the darkness here spoken of is undoubtedly the 'succession' of the one to the other, arising from the revolution of the earth round its axis,—a strong confirmation of the opinion that the sun had already been brought into being. As to the expedient fancied by some commentators of a temporary luminary, 'an aurora-like meteor,' to perform the office of the sun for the three first days and nights, we see not why Omnipotence should have resorted to it when the production of the sun itself was equally easy; and that the letter of the record does not militate with this supposition we shall endeavor to show in the note on v. 14. It may here be remarked, that the interpretation which has sometimes been given to the word 'light,' as implying a subtle, ethereal, all-pervading fluid,

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night: and the evening and the morning were the first day.

f Ps. 74. 16. & 104. 20.

which produces light from being excited by appropriate agents, and of which philosophers have imagined the sun to be the great exciting instrument, receives no countenance from the predominant usage of the word in the sacred writers. The notion of a *light* which does not actually *shine* is entirely foreign to the simplicity of the primeval tongue; and though we neither affirm nor deny the theory as a matter of science, we are confident that such an interpretation is doing great violence to the meaning of words; nor would it probably ever have found a place in the explication of the Mosaic cosmogony, had it not been for the purpose of solving the supposed difficulty in the historian's statement that light was created on the first day, and yet the sun not till the fourth. This difficulty we trust will appear on a subsequent page to be altogether imaginary, and consequently the proposed key to it entirely useless.

5. *And God called the light Day.*

This phrase is somewhat remarkable in this place. As there were now no human beings to make use of language, and as God himself could stand in no need of articulate words to express either his will or his works, it is not at once obvious in what way the clause is to be understood. For the most part, by God's 'calling' any thing by a particular name is meant rather a *declaration of the nature, character, or qualities* of the thing named, than the mere bestowment of an appellation by which it should be ordinarily known. In the present case, therefore, it is probably to be understood that there was something in the import of the word יוֹם *yom*, *day* which rendered it a peculiarly appropriate term by which to express the diurnal continuance of light, and one that he would have to be employed by men for this purpose when they should be

created, and should begin to express their thoughts by language. Yet a great degree of uncertainty rests upon the etymology of the word. The supposition of Gesenius is perhaps as probable as any other, viz. that it comes by a slight softening of the guttural ת from רָחַם (רָחַם, רָחַם) *to be warm, hot, to glow with heat*; analogous to which is the Arabic *yuhina, to glow with anger*. This in reference to the sultry climate of the East, would seem to be a very suitable designation of the day as distinguished from the night. In either case it cannot be doubted, that there was in some way a peculiar intrinsic adaptedness in the terms appropriated to *day* and *night*, to point out the distinguishing nature of each, as otherwise it is not easy to see why the original words אֵר *or*, *light*, and חֹשֶׁךְ *hoshek*, *darkness* should not have answered the purpose equally well. And so in regard to the names 'heaven' and 'earth' bestowed on the firmament and the dry land. What may be the bearing of these passages on the question touching the primitive language of the human race, would be a very interesting subject of inquiry, but one into which it falls not within the compass of our present plan to enter.—¶ *And the evening and the morning were the first day.* Heb. 'And there was evening and there was morning, one day (יוֹם אֶחָד *yom ahad*).' The evening is probably mentioned first because the darkness preceded the light. On the ground of this recorded order of things in the sacred narrative, the Jews commenced their day of twenty-four hours from the evening. Lev. 23. 32.—The remark of Josephus on this clause is worthy of note. He observes, 'This was indeed the *first* day; but Moses said it was *one* day; the cause of which I am able to give even now; but because I have promised to give

6 ¶ And God said, « Let there be a firmament in the midst of

g Job 37. 18. Ps. 136. 5. Jer. 10. 12. & 51. 15.

such reasons for all things in a treatise by itself, I shall put off its exposition till that time.' J. Antiq. B. I. c. 1. § 1. He evidently considered the phrase 'one day' as having, in this connection, something of a peculiar sense. What that was can only be determined from other instances of the usage that obtains in regard to each of these terms. As to the numeral אחד *one*, we find several instances in which its true import seems to be that of *certain, peculiar, special*, Lat. *quidam*, as Dan. 8. 13, 'Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before me a *ram*,' Heb. אֶחָד אֵיִל *a certain ram*, i. e. a ram of a peculiar description; one having two horns of unequal height. Ezek. 7. 5, 'Thus saith the Lord God; an evil, *an only evil*, behold, is come,' Heb. רָעָה אֶחָד *one evil*, i. e. an evil of a unique and unwonted nature. Cant. 6. 9, 'My dove, my undefiled is (but) one; she is the (only) one of her mother, she is the choice (one) of her that bare her;' where it is plain that the term 'one' conveys the idea of something *peculiar, something especially distinguished* from others of the same class. Comp. Gen. 37. 20. Kings 19. 4. —20. 13. Dan. 8. 13. Now if this sense may be admitted in the present passage, to which we see no valid objection, the meaning will be, that the evening and the morning constituted a *certain, a special, a peculiar day, a day sui generis*; in other words, a period of time of indefinite length. For that the Heb. יוֹם *yom, day* is repeatedly used in the indefinite sense of *epoch or period*, no one will question who is at all acquainted with the Scriptural idiom. Thus, in the very first instance in which it occurs after the history of the six days' work, as if to furnish us with authority for such a rendering, we find it employed in a collective sense to denote the whole

the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

six days' period of the creation; 'These are the generations of the heavens and the earth, in *the day* (בְּיוֹם *beyom*) that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.' So in Job 18. 20, it appears to be put for the whole period of a man's life; 'They that come after him shall be astonished at *his day* (יוֹמוֹ *yomu*);' and in Is. 30. 8, for all future time; 'Now go, note it in a book, that it may be for the *time to come* (לְיוֹם *for the latter day*), for ever and ever.' In like manner the phrase, 'The day of the Lord,' so often occurring, undoubtedly denotes a period of indeterminate length. To this it may indeed be objected that the day here spoken of is said to have been made up of evening and morning; and how, it will be asked, could a single evening and morning constitute a day of indefinite duration? To this we reply, that nothing is more common in Hebrew than to find the singular used in a collective sense equivalent to the plural. When it is said, therefore, that 'the evening and the morning were a certain day,' we understand it as equivalent to saying, that a series or succession of evenings and mornings (Gr. εἰκοτεταρα, twenty-four hour days) constituted a peculiar kind of day, a day, a period, of undefined extent; and so of the subsequent days of the creative week; the sense of the common day being really involved in that of the other; or in other words, each of the six indefinite days or periods, being made up of an equally indefinite number of common or twenty-four hour days. It is doubtless under some disadvantages that this interpretation is thus briefly and nakedly proposed, but as our limits will not allow enlargement, we have no alternative but to leave it to commend itself as best it may to the judgment of the reader. By the author it has not been rashly adopted.

7 And God made the firmament, <sup>a</sup> and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* <sup>1</sup> above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven: and the evening and the morning were the second day.

h Prov. 8. 28. i Ps. 148. 4.

6. *Let there be a firmament.* Or, Heb. רקיע *an expansion.* The original word for 'firmament' comes from a root (רקע) signifying primitively *to beat, to smite or stamp with the feet, or other instrument, to make hard or firm by treading; hence, to spread out by beating, as thin plates of metal, and finally to stretch out, to expand, as a curtain.* The sense of 'expansion' is undoubtedly prominent in the present use of the term, yet subordinate to this is the idea of a 'firmament' (Gr. στερεωμα), or that which firmly supports an incumbent weight, as the atmosphere does the masses of watery clouds above. But since the aerial regions, by an illusion of the senses, *seem* to extend to the heavenly bodies, therefore the sun, moon, and stars are said to be placed *in* the firmament, though in reality removed to immense distances beyond it. It is the usage of the Scriptures to describe the things of the natural world *as they appear*, as they strike the eyes of plain unlettered observers; accordingly in former ages, before the true structure of the solar system was understood, the idea naturally suggested by the word 'firmament' was *that of the blue vault of heaven*; but now that our superior knowledge enables us to correct the impressions of the senses, we interpret the term with stricter propriety of the extensive circumambient fluid *the atmosphere*, or rather of the region which it occupies.—¶ *In the midst of the waters.* This rendering, though answering very nearly to the *letter* of the original, would be better exchanged for 'between,' a term which gives the English reader a far more accurate idea of the true situation and use of the firmament as above described.

In our modes of speech one thing may be said to be *in the midst* of another, as a stone in a bucket of water, without at the same time wholly separating the parts of the containing substance. But the design of the firmament was *wholly to separate* the waters above from the waters below, and to express this the word 'between' is much more appropriate than 'in the midst.'—¶ *Let it divide.* Heb. מִבְּרִיךְ *let it be separating*, i. e. let it continue to separate. The original implies a continued act. So Is. 59. 2, 'Your iniquities *have separated* (Heb. מִבְּרִיךְ *are separating*) between you and your God,' i. e. continue to separate, form a fixed ground of separation. By this arrangement one portion of the waters remained suspended in the upper regions of ether, whilst another was forced down in immediate contact with the body of the earth, and the expanse left void by their separation was called by the name of 'firmament,' or 'heaven.' Probably a considerable portion of the space now occupied by the atmosphere was previously occupied by the surrounding waters, as the Psalmist says, referring to this period, Ps. 104. 6, 'They stood above the mountains.'

7. *Waters which were under.* Rather, 'waters which *are* under,' 'waters which *are* above,' &c.; for it cannot be conceived how the firmament should be the first means of dividing the waters, if a portion of them were *already* above, and a portion *already* below.

8. *Called the firmament heaven.* The correct interpretation of the term 'heaven,' or 'heavens,' depends of course upon that of 'firmament.' If this has been rightly explained, it will follow that the word 'heaven' does not in strict propriety, though in general usage



9 ¶ And God said, <sup>1</sup> Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry

k Job 26. 10. & 38. 8. Ps. 33. 7. & 95. 5. & 104.

it does, include the heavenly bodies. This is confirmed by 2 Pet. 3. 5—7. 'Whereby the world that then was perished; but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store reserved unto fire,' &c. Here it will be noted that 'the *world* which then was' is opposed to 'the *heavens and the earth* which now are,' as if they were commensurate terms; and as it was only the globe with its surrounding atmosphere which felt the effects of the deluge, so it is to be inferred that if a future physical destruction be here intended, it will be of the same extent. Consequently 'heaven' is a term for the atmosphere. The phrases, 'hosts of heaven,' 'stars of heaven,' &c., do indeed frequently occur, but it is because the starry hosts are *apparently* placed in the superior regions of that which is *really and truly* 'heaven,' viz. the atmospheric firmament.

9. *Let the waters—be gathered together unto one place.* The vast mass of waters which had hitherto covered the entire surface of the globe was now to be brought within a narrower compass, and large tracts of the submerged earth to be reclaimed and rendered habitable ground. Of the causes or movements by which this mighty result was effected no detail is given. It is easy to conceive that it must have been attended by a tremendous convulsion of the exterior portions of the globe, and it is not unlikely that many of the irregular and broken appearances and traces of violent action which are now visible on the earth's surface are to be referred to this event. The language of the Psalmist, Ps. 104. 6—9, would indicate that the phenomena must have been striking and awful beyond description;—

*land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good.

11 And God said, Let the earth

9. & 136. 6. Prov. 8. 29. Jer. 5. 22. 2 Pet. 3. 5.

'Thou coveredst it (the earth) with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the noise of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains, they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.' This may be considered as an appropriate comment on the phrase 'one place,' which is not to be taken in its strictest import, but merely as implying that the waters were *for the most part* congregated together in one vast body, instead of being universally diffused over the face of the earth. This is the state of things which we now contemplate; the various great seas and oceans constituting in fact but one body of water called in different regions by different names, as the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Southern, &c. oceans.

10. *Seas.* Heb. יָמִים *yamim*, from a word signifying *tumultuous agitation* and *roaring*. The term is therefore used in many instances in the symbolical language of the prophets to denote a vast body of people in a state of restless commotion. See Ps. 65. 8. Is. 57. 20. Jer. 51. 42. Rev. 17. 15. The word is sometimes applied to a lesser collection of waters, as that which one of the Evangelists denominates a 'sea,' Matt. 8. 32, another calls a 'lake,' Luke 8: 33; and it is elsewhere used to denote not a body of water, but the reservoir which contains it, as the 'brazen sea' of Solomon, 2 Chron. 4. 2, and the 'sea of glass' of the Apocalypse, ch. 4. 6.

11. *Let the earth bring forth grass.* Heb. יִצְמַח *the tender budding grass*, a term applicable to every kind of grassy



bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding <sup>m</sup> fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself,

1 Heb. 6. 7. m Luke 6. 44.

or verdant vegetable in a state of sprouting, and pointing more especially to such as are propagated rather from the root than the seed.—¶ *Herb yielding seed.* Heb. מזריע זרע *seeding seed.* Gr. σπειρον σπερμα; by which is meant such wild or cultivable plants as were to propagate themselves by yielding, shedding or scattering their seeds. The word 'herb' embraces the whole department of the vegetable world between grasses and trees, the three grand divisions which are recognised in this verse.—¶ *Fruit tree yielding fruit.* Heb. עשה פרי *making fruit.* For a view of the scriptural usage in respect to the word *make* in the sense of *increase, multiplication, accumulation*, see note on Gen. 12. 5. As trees by their height rise superior to the rest of the vegetable tribes, they are, in prophetic style, a symbol of persons of rank, eminence and authority. The grass, on the other hand, denotes the mass of the common people. See this confirmed Ezek. 17. 24.—31. 5. Is. 14. 8. Rev. 8. 7.

14. *Let there be lights, &c.* It is unquestionable that the Scriptures generally describe the phenomena of the natural world *as they appear*, rather than according to strict scientific truth. Thus the sun and moon are said to rise and set—the stars to fall—and the moon to be turned into blood. Consequently, if this history of the creation were designed to describe the effects of the six days' work *as they would have appeared to a spectator, had one been present*,—a supposition rendered proba-

ble from its being said, 'Let the dry land appear (Heb. be seen),' when as yet there was no eye to see it—then we may reasonably conclude that the sun was formed on the first day, or perhaps had been created even *before* our earth, and was in fact the cause of the vicissitude of the three first days and nights. But as the globe of the earth was during that time surrounded by a dense mass of mingled air and water, the rays of the sun would be intercepted; only a dim glimmering light, even in the day time, would appear; and the bodies of the heavenly luminaries would be entirely hidden, just as they now are in a very cloudy day. Let it be supposed then that on the fourth day the clouds, mists, and vapors were all cleared away, and the atmosphere made pure and serene; the sun of course would shine forth in all his splendor, and to the eye of our imagined spectator would seem to have been just created; and so at night of the moon and stars. This effect of the divine power, according to the usual analogy of the Scriptures, is described from its appearance, and the language employed—'let there be lights in the firmament'—and—'he made two great lights and set them in the firmament'—is to be interpreted on the principle above stated. They might then be said to be 'made,' because they then first began to be visible, and to perform the office for which they were designed. The original word for 'made' is not the same as that which is rendered 'create.' It is a term frequently employed to signify *constituted, appointed*.

n Deut. 4. 19. Ps. 74. 16. & 136. 7.

signs, and ° for seasons, and for days, and years.

o Ps. 74. 17. & 104. 19.

*set for a particular purpose or use.*—

Thus it is said that God '*made* Joseph a father to Pharaoh'—'*made* him lord of Egypt'—'*made* the Jordan a border between the tribes'—'*made* David the head of the heathen;' and so in innumerable other instances. As therefore the rainbow was *made* or *constituted* a sign, though it might have existed before, so the sun, moon, and stars, may be said to have been *made* and *set* as lights in the firmament, on the fourth day, though actually called into existence on the first, or previously. The same result had indeed been *really* effected by the same means during the previous three days and nights, but these luminaries were henceforth by their rising and setting, to be the *visible* means of producing this separation or succession. — ¶ *Lights.* Heb. מַאֲרוֹת *lighters*, instruments of illumination, light-bearers, light-dispensers. The original word is different from that rendered 'light,' (אֵר) v. 3. — ¶ *To divide the day,* &c. Heb. 'To separate between the day and between the night.' —

¶ *Let them be for signs.* That is, let signs be observed by means of them. The manner in which the heavenly bodies were destined to serve for 'signs,' in the sense in which that term generally occurs in the Scriptures, may be learned from such passages as the following; Luke 21. 25. 'And there shall be *signs* in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.' Acts 2. 19, 20. 'And I will show wonders in the heavens above, and *signs* in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke; The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before that great and notable day of the Lord come.' They answer this end,

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

therefore, whenever the judgments of God or extraordinary events are *signified* by remarkable appearances in them. In this way eclipses of the sun and moon, comets, meteors, falling stars, &c., serve as *signs*, i. e. as preternatural tokens or monitions of the divine agency in the sight of men. This is the genuine force of the original, which very often conveys the idea of a *miraculous* interference or manifestation. Ps. 65. 8. 'They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy *tokens* (אוֹתוֹת *signs*).' That they may have been designed also to subserve important purposes in the various economy of human life, as in affording *signs* to the mariner to aid him in navigation, and to the husbandman to guide him in regard to the proper seasons for ploughing, sowing, planting, pruning, reaping, is not improbable, though we think this not so strictly the true import of the original. But it is certain they *have* answered for this end, and perhaps, were so designed. — ¶ *And for seasons.* Heb. מִעֲדָרָם *set or appointed times*; from a root (עָדָר) signifying *to fix by previous appointment*. The phrase points not only to the seasons of the year, which are regulated by the course of the sun, and to the computation of months and years, but also to fasts, feasts, and other religious solemnities, such as were *appointed* to be observed by the people of Israel. Compare Is. 66. 23. 1 Chron. 23. 31. Ps. 104. 19. — ¶ *And for days and years.* As the word 'for' is here omitted before 'years,' though occurring before each of the other terms, the sense of the phrase is undoubtedly 'for days *even* years;' implying that a *day* is often to be taken for a *year*, as is the case in prophetic computation. See Ezek. 4. 6. Dan. 9. 24, 25. Of two words

16 And God <sup>p</sup> made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and <sup>q</sup> the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* <sup>r</sup> the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.

p Ps. 136. 7, 8, 9. & 148. 3. 5. q Ps. 8. 3. r Job. 38. 7.

connected by the copulative 'and' the last is very frequently merely exegetical or explanatory of the first; as Eph. 4. 11. 'And he gave (i. e. appointed) some pastors and teachers,' i. e. pastors *even* teachers. 2 Cor. 1. 3. (Gr.) 'Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' i. e. as rightly rendered in our common translation, 'God *even* the Father, &c.' The original word for *year* (שנה) has the import of *change* or *reiteration* from the circuit or revolution involved in the idea.

16. *God made two great lights.* The sun and moon are alike called *great* luminaries from their apparently equal, or nearly equal size, not from the degree of light which they give. Every thing in this narrative is described with reference to its *appearance* to the eye of a supposed spectator. It would seem that the words, 'And it was so,' in the preceding verse were designed to inform us of the *actual execution* of the creating command in respect to the luminaries; if so, we see no serious objection to supposing that this and the two ensuing verses are to be taken parenthetically, the writer's scope being to inform us, that God *had* previously created these bodies for the purpose here mentioned, but that they had not hitherto been able to answer the ends of their formation on account of the turbid state of the atmosphere. Otherwise the passage must be considered as a mere repetition, in more expanded particulars, of what is affirmed in the preceding verse. The phrase, therefore, 'And God made' would be better read 'For

18 And to <sup>a</sup> rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good*.

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the

s Jer. 31. 35.

God had made.' This we offer, however, merely as a suggestion on a point which deserves perhaps a more strict investigation.—¶ *The greater light.* That is, the sun, usually termed in the Hebrew שמש *shemesh*, i. e. *minister* or *servant*, from its *ministering* light and heat to the earth with its inhabitants and productions. The name was well adapted, as perhaps it was designed, to prevent the sun from becoming an object of religious worship, a species of idolatry which crept into the world at a very early period.—¶ *To rule the day.* To regulate the day as to its commencement by its rising and as to its close by its setting; to be, as it were, a *presiding power* over the day and its various transactions and events.

20. *The moving creature.* Heb. שרץ *sheretz*. It is remarkable that there are two distinct words, of very different origin, which the English translators have rendered promiscuously 'creeping creatures' or 'creeping things,' and also 'moving creatures,' following no doubt the authority of the Septuagint, which gives ῥεπτα *reptiles* for both; thus making the order of the successive creations much less clear and perspicuous in our version than it is in the Hebrew text. The first of these words is that here employed שרץ *sheretz*, rendered in the margin 'creeping creatures.' It comes from a root שרץ *sharatz* signifying to *bring forth*, *increase*, or *multiply abundantly*; and is in fact the very verb which in this same verse is rendered 'bring forth abundantly.' Thus too Gen. 8. 17, 'That they may

moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And "God created great

u ch. 6. 20. & 7. 14. & 8. 19. Ps. 104. 26.

*breed abundantly* (יִשְׂרָצוּ) in the earth, and be fruitful and multiply in the earth.' Ex. 1. 7. 'And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, (וַיִּשְׂרָצוּ) and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them.' Ex. 8. 3, 'And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly (יִשְׂרָצוּ).' From this it appears that the proper translation of the noun שִׂרָץ is not the *creeping*, but the *rapidly multiplying* or *swarming creature*. It is applied not only to the smaller kinds of fishes, but to various species of land animals, as mice, snails, lizards, &c. Lev. 11. 29, and even to fowls, Lev. 11. 23; in short, to all kinds of living creatures inhabiting either land or water, which are oviparous and remarkable for fecundity, as we know is pre-eminently the case with the finny tribes. Ps. 104. 24. 25, 'The earth is full of thy riches; so is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable.' The other word translated 'creeping things' is רֶמֶשׂ, and the creatures expressed by this name were created during the sixth day or period. We shall afterwards show (see note on v. 24) that it has a very different meaning from שִׂרָץ here applied to a part of the animate creations of the fifth day.—

¶ That hath life. Heb. נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה *living soul*. The original word implies 'breath,' and so denotes an animal which *lives by breathing*. It is chiefly applied in the Scriptures to creatures capable of sensation, and thus distinguished from inanimate matter. Though spoken of man, it does not by itself denote the intellectual or rational faculty, which enters into our ideas of the human soul. See note on ch. 2. v. 7.—¶ And fowl that may fly. Heb. וְעוֹף יָעוֹפֵם. By ren-

whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

dering the Heb. עוֹף *oph* by 'fowl' our translators have limited its meaning so as to include only the birds. But the term includes also *winged insects*, as is evident from Lev. 11. 20, 'All fowls (הָעוֹף) that creep, going upon four.' The proper rendering is not *fowl*, but *flying thing*, including the tribes of all kinds that can raise themselves up into the air; as is indeed made obvious by the expression in the next verse כָּל עוֹף כָּנָף *every flying thing that hath wings*. From the letter of this clause it would appear that the fowls, as well as the fishes, were formed out of the water, but in ch. 2. 19, it is said that 'out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the earth and every fowl of the air.' To reconcile the apparent discrepancy some have proposed to interpret the word 'ground' in a large sense, as synonymous with 'earth,' including both land and water. A better mode is to vary slightly the translation in the present passage, which the original will well admit, and read, 'and let the fowl fly above the earth.' The object of the writer here seems to be to specify the respective elements assigned as the habitation of the fishes and the flying things. In the other passage the design is to acquaint us with the source from whence the beasts and birds originated. They are probably here mentioned together from the similarity of the elements in which they live, and of the motions by which they pass through them.—¶ In the open firmament. Heb. עַל פְּנֵי רִקִּיעַ *on the face of the firmament*. To an eye looking upwards the flight or sailing motion of a bird appears to be *on the face of the sky*, which, as Job says, is 'spread out as a molten looking glass.'

21. God created great whales. Heb.

22 And God blessed them, saying, <sup>w</sup> Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas,

w ch. 8. 17.

הַתַּנִּינִים הַגְּדֹלִים. Gr. τὰ κητὴ τὰ μεγάλα. The execution or effect of the command contained in the preceding verse is here described. The rendering adopted in our translation has evidently been governed by that of the Septuagint, but it decidedly fails to represent the true import of the original. Indeed, neither the Greek nor the English translators have been consistent with themselves in rendering the Heb. word תַּן *tan* or תַּנִּים, *tannim*, in both which forms it occurs. We find them in other places, for instance, severally translating it by δράκων and 'dragon.' Thus Ezek. 29. 3, 'I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon. (Heb. הַתַּנִּים הַגְּדֹלִים. Gr. τοῦ δράκοντα τὸν μέγαν), that lieth in the midst of the rivers.'

The figure in this passage is evidently borrowed from the crocodile of the Nile, for to what could a king of Egypt be more properly compared than to the crocodile? A similar allusion is doubtless to be recognised, Is. 51. 9, 'Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon (תַּנִּין *tannin*)?' Yet in numerous other passages the term is applied in such connections that neither whale, crocodile, nor dragon would seem to be intended. Thus in Job 30. 29. Ps. 44. 19. Is. 13. 22—34. 13.—35. 7.—Jer. 9. 11.—14. 6.—49. 33. Mic. 1. 8, the scene of the animal's residence is one of utter desolation, and the animal himself is described as snuffing the wind, wailing, and belonging to the desert. In Lam. 4. 3, it is termed in our translation 'sea monster,' though from its being said to 'draw out the breast to its young,' the term would appear to denote some kind of wild beast, rather than a tenant of the deep. In Mal. 1. 3. it is said, 'And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons (תַּנִּין) and

and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

*tannuth*) of the wilderness. On the whole, the probability, we think, is, that the original is a generic term more peculiarly appropriate to the serpent or lizard tribes, but applied also without much regard to scientific precision to different kinds of animals of large dimensions and fearful properties whether aquatic or terrestrial or both. Without, therefore, absolutely condemning the present translation, 'great whales,' we may still admit that 'great reptiles' would have been better; and if there be any term in the sacred narrative which can be fairly supposed to embrace the extinct tribes of the Saurian and other species of animals whose huge remains are among the principal wonders of geological discovery, it will scarcely be questioned that תַּן *tan*, תַּנִּים, *tannim*, or תַּנִּין *tannin*, with which לִיָּתָן *leviathan* is closely connected, may claim that distinction. The result to which we are brought is, that the work of the fifth day was the creation of the inhabitants of the waters; of the birds and the winged insects; and also of the amphibious reptiles.—¶ *Living creature that moveth.* Heb. רֹמֵשׁ *ro'mesh* creeping. The original, though properly signifying to tread, is applied both to things which creep on the earth, and which swim in the waters, Lev. 11. 44, 46. Ps. 69. 34. Gen. 1. 25. In the language of modern zoology, fishes are not ranked among reptiles, but the ancient writers whether sacred or profane made not such nice distinctions.

22. *God blessed them.* That is, gave them power to propagate their several species by generation, and thus to increase into a countless multitude. This idea of increase or multiplication is often conveyed by the word *blessing* in the sacred writers, as Gen. 26. 60, 'And they blessed (i. e. invoked a blessing



24 ¶ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

upon) Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, *be thou the mother of thousands of millions*, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.' Ps. 123. 3, 4, 'Thy wife shall be a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold that thus shall the man be *blessed* that feareth the Lord.' It is in virtue of this 'blessing' of God that the almost infinite increase of the various animated tribes of the creation has hitherto resulted, and is still perhaps going on; though the fact of a continued multiplication whether of animals or men is a matter not easily determined.—¶ *Fill the waters in the seas.* The word 'seas' here evidently has the meaning of *gulfs* or *cavities* forming the reservoir of the waters of the ocean. See note on v. 10. Thus too are we to understand the term, Is. 11. 9, 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as *the waters cover the sea*,' i. e. the bed of the sea.

24. *Living creature.* Heb. נפש חיה *living soul*; collective singular for 'living souls.'—¶ *Cattle.* Heb. בהמה *behemah*. Under this term are included the various species of tame and domestic animals, especially such as are herbivorous.—¶ *Creeping thing.* Heb. רמש *remes*. In our translation we here find *creeping things* again mentioned and included among the objects of the sixth day's creation. The English phrase in its common acceptation undoubtedly implies some of the insect or reptile tribes; and this sense is plainly favored by the Septuagint rendering ἐρπετα; but the Heb. רמש is derived from a verb signifying in a more general sense, *to move* or *to tread*, and

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

is by no means limited in its application to insects or reptiles. Thus we find it, Ps. 104. 20, applied to the beasts of the forest, 'Thou makest darkness and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest *do creep forth* (הִרְמִשׁ). Yet that it is occasionally used of the inhabitants of the water is clear from Lev. 11. 46, 'This is the law of every living creature that *moveth* (הִרְמִשׁ) in the waters; and from Ps. 69. 34, 'Let the heavens praise him, the seas, and every thing *moveth* (רמש) therein.' In the present case, as the רמש are grouped with the בהמה and הַחַיָּה הָאֲרָצִית i. e. the larger herbivorous cattle and the larger beasts of prey, it is probable that the term refers to the smaller classes of land animals whose bodies are brought by means of short legs into closer contact with the earth. If reptiles are included, they must be exclusively land-reptiles, as the amphibious species were embraced in the previous day's work.

—¶ *Beast.* Heb. חיה *hayah*. This term in Hebrew is derived from a word signifying 'life' or 'living,' and is the term usually applied to *wild* beasts in contradistinction from the *tame*, which, as just remarked, are usually, though not always, denominated *cattle*. Although it is probable that none of the animal tribes at the creation or before the fall were wild in the sense of *fierce* and *ravenous*, yet the different species undoubtedly possessed different natures, some being originally more vivacious, active, and vigorous, and less adapted to man's dominion than others.

25. *And God made.* It is to be remarked that although the earth and the water are commanded to bring forth respectively the creatures which were to



26 ¶ And God said, \* Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and † let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,

x ch. 5. 1. & 9. 6. Ps. 100. 3. Ec. 7. 29. Acts, 17.

inhabit them, yet in speaking of the actual execution of the work, it is not said the earth created, or the waters created, their several tenants, but that *God created* them one and all. No creative power was delegated to the elements in any degree. Omnipotence alone was adequate to the result, and omnipotence only effected it.

26. *And God said, let us make man.* The remaining and crowning work of the sixth day, the creation of man, is here described. The habitation having been duly prepared, the destined tenant was now to be ushered into it. This purpose is expressed by a peculiar phraseology, 'Let us make man;' as if by way of consultation. Instead of saying, 'Let there be man,' as he had before said, 'Let there be light,' or giving a command to the elements to bring forth so noble a creature, he speaks of the work as immediately his own, and in the language of deliberation; implying thereby not any more intrinsic difficulty in this act, of his power than in the creation of the smallest insect, but the superior dignity and excellence of the creature he was about to form. The language employed is not, however, in itself any more a decisive argument in favor of the doctrine of the Trinity than the use of the plural term *Elohim*, v. 1, on which we have already remarked. Comp. Job, 18. 2, 3. 2 Sam. 24, 14. The original for man אָדָם *adam* is from a root signifying *to be red*, and is closely related to the Hebrew word for *blood*, which the Scriptures speak of as the seat of vitality, Gen. 9. 4, and which gives to the human countenance in many countries, particularly those inhabited by the Caucasian race, to which

and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

20, 28, 29. 1 Cor. 11. 7. y ch. 9. 2. Ps. 8. 6.

the Jews belonged, its ruddy blush or flesh-tint. Others, with less likelihood, trace its origin to אָדָמָה *adamah*, ground, earth, while Josephus upon very insufficient authority combines both; 'This man was called Adam, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies one that is red, because he was formed out of red earth compounded together; for of that kind is virgin or true earth.' Ant. B. I. c. 1. It is also the generic name for the whole race, who are called 'Adam,' Gen. 9. 6, and 'sons of Adam,' Ps. 11. 4.—¶ *In our image and after our likeness.* It does not appear that these two words materially differ in import from each other. They are probably used together merely for the purpose of making the expression more emphatic. That the 'image of God' implies a likeness to him in moral attributes is plainly intimated in the words of the Apostle, Col. 3. 10, where he exhorts christians to 'put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge *after the image* of him that created him.' See also Eph. 4. 24. But there can be as little doubt that the phrase in this connection denotes primarily *the possession of dominion and authority*. This is evinced by the words of the ensuing clause, 'let them have dominion,' which is to be regarded as explanatory of the term 'image.' So the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11. 7, denominates the man the 'image and glory of God,' especially on the ground of his being 'the head of the woman,' or having pre-eminence over her. The expression implies that man was appointed by the Creator to sustain towards inferior animals a relation strikingly similar to that in which he himself stands tow-

27 So God created man in his own image, <sup>z</sup> in the image of God created he him; <sup>a</sup> male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, <sup>b</sup> Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the

earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that <sup>†</sup> moveth upon the earth.

29 ¶ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bear-

z 1 Cor. 11. 7. a ch. 5. 2. Mal. 2. 15. Mat. 19. 4.

Mark, 10. 6. bch. 9. 1, 7. Lev. 26. 9. Ps. 137. 2.

ards man; and hence that man upon earth represents or bears the image of God nearly in the same sense in which the governor of a province is said to represent or bear the image of his sovereign.—¶ *Let them have dominion.* From the use of the plural pronoun here it is evident that 'man' is taken in a collective sense implying the whole race. It was not Adam alone who was to exercise this dominion, but his posterity also. In virtue of this delegated authority it is probable that Adam's control over the animal creation was much more complete before the fall than that which his descendants have exercised since; but that in consequence of his transgression this ascendancy or lordship was in a great measure forfeited, and his rebellion against God punished by the rebellion of the subject creatures against himself. Still there appears to have been an original difference in the constitution and instincts of the 'cattle' and the 'beasts,' and we see no reason to suppose that the lion and the tiger were *ever* so completely subject to the dominion of man as the ox and the sheep. Probably the leading idea is, that man was invested with a dominion over the animal tribes by being created with powers of a higher grade, such as gave him immense advantages over them, and made him capable, in great measure, of reducing them to subjection, and thus of making them subservient to his pleasure or use.—¶ *Over all the earth.* That is, over all the creatures and productions of the earth, and over the earth itself, to manage it as they should see fit for their own advantage and comfort.

27. *Male and female created he them.* That is, the destined human race was to be constituted male and female. The allusion to the other sex is evidently proleptical, as nothing had yet been said of the creation of woman. This is detailed in all its particulars in the next chapter.

28. *And God blessed them, &c.* Here again the term 'blessing' has reference to the *multiplication of seed* as explained above, v. 22.—¶ *Subdue it.* Heb. **כבש**. This may be understood either of bringing the earth, the material globe, into subjection to the uses of man by the labors of agriculture, by obtaining possession of its mineral treasures, by levelling its hills and filling up its valleys, and making it in every possible way to conduce to his well-being; or the 'earth' here may be taken as synonymous with its brute inhabitants and to 'subdue' it is but another term for obtaining and exercising that mastery over them which was especially designed for man at his creation, v. 26. Interpreted in this sense the last clause of the verse is merely explanatory of the meaning of the term 'subdue.'

29. *Behold, I have given you, &c.* It is not perhaps to be understood from the use of the word 'give' that a simple permission was now granted to man of using that for food which it would have been unlawful for him to use without it; for by the very constitution of his nature he was made to be sustained by that food which was most congenial to his physical economy; and thus it must have been lawful for him to employ unless self-destruction had been his duty. The true import therefore of

ing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; <sup>c</sup> to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to <sup>d</sup> every beast of the earth, and to every <sup>e</sup> fowl of the air, and to every thing that creep-

cch. 9. 3. Job, 36. 31. Ps. 104. 14, 15, & 136. 25, & 146. 7. Acts, 14. 17. d Ps. 145. 15, 16, & 147. 9. e Job, 38. 41.

the phrase doubtless is, that God had appointed, constituted, ordained this as the staple article of man's diet. He had formed him with a nature to which a vegetable aliment was better suited than any other. That we do no violence to the historian's language in putting this sense upon it, will be evident from the following instances of parallel usage. Gen. 9. 13, 'I do set my bow in the cloud.' Heb. 'I do give my bow in the cloud;' i. e. I appoint, constitute my bow as a sign of the covenant. 1 Chronicles 17. 22, 'For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever.' Heb. 'Thou hast given (i. e. appointed, constituted) thy people Israel for thyself for a people for ever;' thus rendered in the parallel passage, 2 Sam. 7. 24. 'For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever.' It cannot perhaps be inferred from what is here said that the use of flesh-meat was absolutely forbidden, but it clearly implies that the fruits of the field formed the diet best adapted to the constitution which the Creator had given him. This view of the sense of 'giving' is confirmed by the ensuing verse, where the same phraseology is employed, and God is said to have 'given' the green herb to the beasts and birds. This cannot mean a permission, but an appointment, as explained above. 'There is no difficulty in supposing animal food not in use in the primitive times; for it can hardly be said to be so, gene-

eth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31 And <sup>f</sup> God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

f Ps. 104. 24. 1 Tim. 4. 4.

rally speaking, in Asia, at the present day. The mass of the people have it only occasionally, and in small quantities, and many do not eat flesh-meat more than two or three times in a year.' *Pictorial Bible.*

31. *B. hold it was very good.* This is the divine testimony respecting the works of the creation when all was finished. God saw that every thing was good, because it perfectly answered the end for which it was made. The reason of these words being so frequently repeated throughout the preceding narrative is, to direct attention to the contrast between the original state of things and the present, and to intimate that whatever disorders or evils now exist to mar the works of God, they did not originally belong to them, but have been introduced in consequence of man's transgression.—If it be asked why the space of six days was employed in the work of creation when omnipotence could have effected every thing in a moment, it may be answered, that one reason probably was, that all to whom the record should come might be able more leisurely and distinctly to contemplate the Creator's works as they proceeded successively from his hand. Another reason perhaps was that he might lay the foundation of the weekly division of time, and of the institution of the holy Sabbath, an ordinance to be perpetually observed to the end of the world.

REMARKS.—The reflections naturally

excited by the narrative of the stupendous work of the creation, resolve themselves for the most part into sentiments of the deepest adoration, gratitude and praise, in view of the divine perfections which it displays. The power, wisdom and goodness of the Deity shine forth in these works of his hands, with a light and demonstration which even the most perverted reasonings of fallen nature can neither gainsay nor resist. We feel prepared at once to subscribe to the justice of the apostle's sentence, that he who refuses to admit the existence of a God, or to refer the created universe to him as its author, is utterly without excuse; 'the invisible things of God from the creation of the world, being clearly seen and understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.'

(1.) What a claim is made upon our *gratitude*, that we are furnished with this inestimable record! Without it, what a dreary and impenetrable darkness would rest upon us! What anxious inquiries would harass our minds which we could never answer! But in this short and simple history the great problem, which would for ever have taxed the human intellect, is solved so that a child may learn in an hour from the first page of this sacred book, more than all the philosophers in the world learned without it in thousands of years! Let us then prize beyond price the oracles of inspired truth.

(2.) In directing our thoughts to the amazing display of Power which is visible in the creation, not only in forming, but in constantly upholding the vast fabric, let us not lose sight of the Goodness which is equally conspicuous in all. From what has been manifested, we see how infinitely rich in himself is the glorious and eternal God. What a boundless fulness of life and being, what an immense and inexhaustible treasury of all good, must that be from which so much life and being and conscious and happy intelligence was de-

rived! But it was merely the fruit of his own good pleasure that he was induced to draw upon those stores of being and blessedness within himself, and communicate existence to creatures. He might have remained eternally satisfied with his own perfections, and all the springs of created existence been sealed up for ever. But instead of this, his infinite beneficence has prompted him, out of his own fulness, to bring myriads of worlds and millions of creatures into being, and to make their existence a source of happiness! How liberal, how kind, how benignant, how God-like! Under what constraining bonds of love and gratitude are we laid! How constant, how spontaneous, should be our emotions of thanksgiving and praise! In a transport of joy the Psalmist, Ps. 148, calls upon all created things, animate and inanimate, to join in a hymn of praise to the great Creator; wishing, in effect, that they were all possessed of understandings and tongues, that they might suitably celebrate the perfections that appeared in their formation. Such should be the habitual frame of our spirits.

(3.) The God that has made the universe has made us. We are a part of the great system of things, the origin of which is here detailed. As such, we owe ourselves, in all our being and faculties and powers, to our Creator. He prefers an incontestable claim to all that we have and are. He who is the maker, is the absolute proprietor, lord, and sovereign of all creatures, and has the first and highest title to our reverence, submission, and obedience. Let us, then, yield ourselves to him in the ready and willing subjection of sons and servants. Let us put ourselves confidently under his guidance and guardianship, assured that he will care for, keep, and comfort us. The power which he has visibly put forth in the creation of the heavens and the earth, makes it certain that he can accomplish for us all the great and glorious things of the gospel. He can

## CHAPTER II.

**T**HUS the heavens and the earth were finished, and <sup>a</sup>all the host of them.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 33. 6.

raise us from the dead, change our vile bodies, and clothe us with honor and immortality. This should not seem to us incredible, for he has already performed things equally incredible, and we have constantly before us the effects of a power no less wonderful.

## CHAPTER II.

1. *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished.* Heb. רכלך *were perfected.* The language implies a *gradual process of completion*, and in this sense is not altogether consistent with the popular and prevailing idea entertained of the scope of the first verse of the preceding chapter, viz. that it was intended to import the original instantaneous creation of the heavens and the earth out of nothing. If so, it is not easy to understand what is meant by the expression elsewhere occurring, that 'in six days God created the heavens and the earth;' for the act of creation could not have extended through that whole period. The correct view undoubtedly is, that what are here termed the 'heavens' and the 'earth,' i. e. the firmament and the dry land, were *gradually wrought* to their present state of perfection, and that too, unquestionably, by the subordinate agency of those natural causes which tended to produce the result. That this effect *might* have been brought about in six common days or six hours, is undoubtedly true, yet as a far more prolonged period would harmonize better with the ascertained facts of geology, and is equally consistent, we believe, with the letter of the sacred narrative, we see no objection to considering this the true interpretation. — ¶ *And all the host of them.*

2 <sup>b</sup> And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. 20. 11. & 31. 17. Deut. 5. 14. Heb. 4. 4.

The original for 'host' (צבא *tsaba*, pl. *tsებაoth* or *sabaoth*) properly denotes a *band or multitude duly disposed and marshalled, an army in battle array.* Hence the visible contents of the heavens and earth are so called from their multitude, variety and order, and their being subject to the power that called them into existence, like a well-disciplined army to the will of a commander; wherefore it is said, Is. 45. 12, 'I have stretched out the heavens, and *all their hosts have I commanded.*' The word is accordingly employed in the phrase 'Lord of hosts,' a title of the Most High, which in two instances in the writings of the apostles is given in the Hebrew form of 'Lord God of Sabaoth,' Rom. 9. 29. James, 5. 4. In another passage, Rev. 4. 8, the same phrase in the original taken from Is. 6. 3, is rendered 'Lord God Almighty.' The expression 'host of heaven,' besides being spoken of the stars of the firmament, Deut. 4. 19. Is. 34. 4, is also repeatedly applied, though doubtless in a figurative sense, to the angels, 1 Kings 22. 19. Luke 2. 13, 15; and in Ex. 12. 41, the people of Israel, as a great organized body or marshalled army of worshippers, are called the 'hosts of the Lord.' The term is applied also to the order of priests and Levites, exclusive of the rest of the congregation, who performed the work of the sanctuary. In the Greek version it is rendered by κοσμος *ornament, garnishing*, which is rather a paraphrase describing the *effect produced* by the hosts of heaven and earth, than an exact translation of the word. It is here evidently used in a sense equivalent to *things created*, parallel to which is the language of the Psalmist.



3 And God 'blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: be-

c Nch. 9. 14. Is. 58. 13.

Ps. 33. 6, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and *all the hosts of them* by the breath of his mouth.'—The first three verses of this chapter properly form the conclusion of ch. 1., and in the division of chapters, should not have been separated from it.

2. *On the seventh day God ended his work.* These words, literally understood, would seem to imply, that the Almighty performed some part of the work of creation on the seventh day. But, as we are elsewhere informed that six days only were actually thus employed, it would, perhaps, be equally proper to render the original 'had ended,' instead of 'ended,' as is done by many commentators. There is, however, no absolute necessity for this, as in Scripture style the 'end' of anything is often synonymous with its 'perfection,' and the holy rest of the Sabbath may have been designed as a kind of perfection, crowning, or consummation of the six days' work.—The original word for 'seventh,' comes from a root, signifying *to be full, complete, entirely made up.* 'Seven,' therefore, is often called a perfect number, being used for *many*, or for a *full number*, however large, as Gen. 33. 3. Lev. 4. 6. Jer. 15. 9. No number mentioned in the sacred volume occurs so frequently as this, and as it is plain that no particular number when viewed abstractedly by itself, apart from the thing numbered, has any more virtue or significancy than another, it is to be inferred that the incessant use of this numeral in the Scriptures carries in it some important allusion. What more probable than that it is founded upon this history of the creation occupying with its Sabbath-rest the space of seven days, and shadowing out a seven-fold division of time to

cause that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

the end of the world?—¶ *Rested on the seventh day.* Heb. שָׁבַת *shabath*, *ceased.* Taking the term 'rest' in its ordinary acceptance, this is obviously applying to the Most High language which is strictly to be predicated only of his creatures. 'The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary,' nor can he stand in need of the refreshment of rest. 'Ceased' would undoubtedly have been a better rendering, as the original is not opposed to weariness but to action. It is true, the idea of *rest* is closely connected with that of *cessation from action*, but they are still distinct, and it is important that the distinction should here be kept in mind, to prevent the impression that the rest spoken of was *repose from fatigue* rather than a *ceasing to create.* From the original 'shabath' to *cease*, comes our English 'sabbath,' a *cessation*, i. e. cessation from the ordinary secular work of the week. There is nothing, therefore, in the genuine import of the term to imply that a *total inaction* is enjoined on that day, but merely a *desisting, and consequent resting, from secular occupations.* The most industrious and even laborious performance of religious services may be perfectly compatible with the *rest*, properly understood, of the holy Sabbath. It is not to be a day of mere indolent repose to body or mind, but a resting from the concerns of this world, in order to an active devotement of ourselves to things spiritual and eternal, things connected with the duties of worship and the highest interest of our own souls and the souls of our fellow-men. Thus the Most High now *ceased* from multiplying the objects of creation, yet in another sense he still continued active, as our Saviour says, John



5. 17, 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work.'

3. *God blessed the seventh day.* A peculiar eminence and distinction are here clearly attributed to the seventh day above the other six, for upon it alone was bestowed the express benediction of the Deity. As it cannot be conceived how any particular day can be said to be 'blessed,' otherwise than by being made the *appointed time* for the communication of some benefit or happiness to intelligent creatures, when God blessed *the seventh day*, he must have pronounced it *to be the time* for conferring his choicest blessings on man. He blessed it, therefore, by connecting inestimable blessings with the proper observance of it. He consecrated it as a day of holy rest and worship; as a season set apart for the devout contemplation of the Creator's works, and the divine perfections manifested in them, and whoever honours the day with a corresponding observance will not fail to experience the peculiar blessings of Heaven in consequence. We shall, therefore, entertain very inadequate views of this institution, if we do not regard the Sabbath as emphatically designed to be a day, not of joyless constraint, or irksome penance, but a day of positive happiness to man. The grand scope of its observances, is to bring the creature into nearer communion with the Creator, and whatever has this effect cannot but be a source of augmented blessedness to the subject of it. The withdrawal of the mind from all worldly cares, the hallowed calm of the season, the exercises of prayer and praise in the closet, the instructive ministrations of the sanctuary, the devout perusal of the Holy Scriptures, the fixed contemplation of the wisdom, power, and goodness displayed in the works of creation, of providence, and grace; all tend to diffuse an ineffable peace and joy over the soul, and impart to it a foretaste of the very bliss of heaven. There, where

angels and the spirits of the blessed are, it is one continued Sabbath. It is a day, a perpetual day of rest, of holy rest; and in that, there is perpetual enjoyment. And to as many as are waiting and desiring this rest of heaven, the rest of the Sabbath will be a source of happiness. To as many as are sensible of the influence of worldly things, in hindering their growth in grace, and preventing nearness of access to God, the holy rest of the Sabbath will be longed for and enjoyed. Far from us then be the feeling which would count the Sabbath other than a delight, which would esteem its services grievous, and its hours a weariness. The Sabbath was made for man; it is among the kindest provisions of heaven for his happiness; and nothing but a state of mind fearfully estranged from the love of God, and at variance with peace, can prevent us from realizing and enjoying it as such.—It is observable that this day is not described by *evening* and *morning*, like the other days, which consisted of light and darkness, but this is all *day* or *light*, representing that glorious sabbatical state of the world yet future, spoken of Is. 60. 20 Rev. 21. 25; and to which the ancient Rabbinical writers thus allude: 'And if we expound the seventh day of the seventh thousand of years, which is the world to come, the exposition is, *and he blessed*, because in the seventh thousand, there shall be there an augmentation of the Holy Ghost, wherein we shall delight ourselves. And so our Rabbins of blessed memory have said in their commentary, '*God blessed the seventh day*,' i. e. the holy God blessed the world to come, which beginneth in the seventh thousand of years.' *Ainsworth*. Time alone can determine the justness of such an interpretation. We cite it merely as an historical fact.—¶ *And sanctified it.* Heb. קָדַשׁ *kadash*. It is by this term that the *positive appointment* of the Sabbath as a day of rest to man, is expressed. God's sanc-

tifying the day is equivalent to his commanding men to sanctify it. As at the close of the creation the seventh day was thus set apart by the Most High for such purposes, without limitation to age or country, the observance of it is obligatory upon the whole human race to whom, in the wisdom of Providence, it may be communicated. This farther appears from the reason why God blessed and sanctified it, viz., '*because that in it he had rested,*' &c., which is a reason of equal force at all times, and equally applying to all the posterity of Adam; and if it formed a just ground for sanctifying the first day, which dawned upon the finished system of the universe, it must be equally so for sanctifying every seventh day to the end of time. The observance of the day is moreover enjoined in the decalogue, which was not abolished with the peculiar polity of the Jews, but remains unalterably binding upon Christians in every age of the world. Some commentators and divines have indeed thought that the mention here made of the Sabbath is merely by anticipation; and that the appointment never took place till the days of Moses, Ex. 20. 11. But if this were the case it is not easy to see how Moses came to specify the circumstance of God's resting on the seventh day, as the reason for that appointment. It would have been a good reason for our first parents and their immediate descendants to hallow the day; but it could be no reason at all to those who lived almost five and twenty hundred years after the event; more especially, when so obvious and cogent a reason as their deliverance out of Egypt was assigned at the very same time. But if the command given to the Jews was a repetition of the injunction given to Adam, then there was an obvious propriety in assigning the reason that was obligatory upon all, as well as that which formed an additional obligation on the Jewish nation in particular. Besides, there are

traces of a Sabbath from the beginning of the world. For if no Sabbath had ever been given, whence came the practice of measuring time by weeks? Yet that custom obtained both in the antediluvian and the patriarchal ages, Gen. 8. 10, 12.—29. 27, 28. Again, although the observance of the Sabbath had no doubt been much neglected in Egypt, yet the remembrance of it was not wholly effaced; for Moses, *before the giving of the law*, speaks of the Sabbath as an institution known and received among them, Ex. 16. 23. And *without any express direction*, they gathered on the sixth day a double portion of manna to serve them on the Sabbath, which surely it could not have been expected that they would have done had no such institution existed. It can scarcely be doubted, therefore, that the Sabbath is as old as the creation, and of the wisdom of such an appointment a moment's reflection will convince us. As God made all things for himself, so he instituted the Sabbath in order that his rational creatures might have stated opportunities of paying him their tribute of prayer and praise. If no period had been fixed by him for the solemnities of public worship, it would have been impossible to bring mankind to an agreement respecting the time when they should render to him their united homage. They would all acknowledge the propriety of serving him in concert; but each would be ready to consult his own convenience. And probably a difference of sentiment would arise as to the length of time to be allotted to his service. Thus there would never be one hour when all should join together in celebrating their Creator's praise. But by an authoritative separation of the seventh day, God has provided that the whole race of men shall acknowledge him, and that his goodness shall be had in everlasting remembrance. This act of separation he has seen good to express by the word '*sanctify,*' which is used

in the Scriptures primarily to denote the *setting apart*, *devoting*, or *appropriating* any thing from a common to a peculiar and generally to a sacred use. Thus God is said to have 'sanctified,' or set apart for a holy use, the first-fruits of the earth, the tabernacle with its various furniture, the tribe of Levi to the office of priests, &c. In this sense to sanctify is the same as to 'hallow,' and is opposed to calling or treating any thing as 'unclean,' or 'common.' The sanctification of the seventh day in the present case, can only be understood of its being *set apart to the special worship and service of God*; for it is to be remembered, that at this time, every thing was holy as far as moral purity was concerned. Every day of the week, as well as the seventh, was in this sense kept holy to God, and it could only be *sanctified* or *set apart*, by being set apart for the objects just stated. Thus the rest of the Sabbath was to be from the beginning a *holy rest*; and as these ideas enter so essentially into the nature of this institution, it may be proper to dwell upon them a little more at length. (1.) The Sabbath is to be a day of *rest*. This formed a prominent part of its original design, and is in fact the most elementary view which can be taken of the institution. Rest is essential to the Sabbath. It is this which constitutes it a Sabbath; and which must be observed on the part of all for whom the Sabbath was intended. The day is, under every dispensation, a portion of time which the Creator has reserved for the rest of all his creatures that require it—for the rest of man and as many of the inferior animals as are subservient to his use and sharers of his toil. It is thus to the other days of the week, what night is to day, and winter to summer; nor is there reason to believe, were there no such rest allowed, that either men or beasts of burden would be able to sustain, for any length of time, the unabated waste of continual labour. But as it

is, both are, on the whole, capable of doing as much, with this weekly alternation of rest, as they could comfortably perform without it. The rest of the Sabbath, therefore, is to be considered as an indispensable part of its due observance; nor can we rid ourselves of the obligation by merely abstaining from bodily labour, while we are otherwise occupied as during the week. It is the allotment of one man to be employed at manual labour, and of another to be employed chiefly in mental exertion; and if the rest of the Sabbath had been designed only as a cessation of bodily labour, to a large proportion of mankind it would have been inapplicable. But this is not the case. 'Six days shall thou labour, and *do all thy work*'—whatever it may be—but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do *any work*, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.' Ex. 20. 9, 10. The rest of the Sabbath is here made obligatory on all classes in general, whether accustomed to manual labour or not, and it cannot be disputed, that the precept applies to every species of occupation. It is indeed, true, that from this universal rest of the Sabbath, there are certain exceptions, usually comprised under the head of works of *necessity* and *mercy*, and so far as our circumstances place us under any of these exceptions, we ought readily and cheerfully to forego our enjoyment of rest, and to fulfil every duty. But let us not be partial judges. We ought to judge and feel, not as if we wished to get rid of the restriction, but as if, desirous of observing the Sabbath, we yielded ourselves to another duty according to the will of God. In the exercise of such feelings we are little likely to err on this head; and in the absence of them, there can be no right observance of the Sabbath, under any circumstances. (2.) The Sabbath is to

be a day of *holy rest*. We have hitherto considered the day, simply as a day of rest, and in this light, the invasion of its sanctity may be summed up under the general fault of carrying forward the employments of the week into the rest of the Sabbath. But mere abstinence from worldly labour, so far from being all that the appointment requires of us, only affords an opportunity for the due discharge of other duties, on which its observance more strictly depends. We come short of the divine requisition, unless we hallow or set apart the rest thus reserved to the special service of the living God, as a day to be religiously observed, as a season to be spent in the various appropriate exercises of public and private worship. It is to be feared that this duty is but imperfectly appreciated even by many who admit, and, in form, observe the Sabbath as a day of rest. It is to be feared that there are many who discontinue their ordinary occupations on the Lord's day, and are nevertheless Sabbath profaners, inasmuch as they carry their observance no farther. Are they not such who rest upon the Sabbath only by resting a great part of the day in their beds, and spend the remainder of it in idle sauntering or vain recreation? 'Is this the *rest* that I have chosen?' may the Lord very properly say of such a mode of devoting the consecrated hours. We have only to revert to the original design of the institution to see that this is a most gross perversion of the rest which it enjoins. God intended by its appointment to secure to all men a seventh portion of their time *for the special business of eternity*, and how this end is to be attained his own word explicitly instructs us, *Is. 58. 13*, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable; and shalt honour him not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own

words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,' &c. Anything short of this is a virtual desecration of this holy season, which not only deprives us of its inestimable benefits, but lays us open to the most marked tokens of the divine displeasure. —¶ *Because that in it he had rested, &c.* These words assign a reason for the institution, and a powerful motive to its observance. The appointment of the Sabbath as a day of rest is here enforced by the example of God's rest after the completion of the six days' work. The institution is thus presented to us not merely in the light of an arbitrary enactment, but as clothed with the constraining moral power, which naturally attaches to such a precept. Such is the innate and inveterate apathy of our nature to exercises of a purely spiritual character, that infinite wisdom sees fit to superadd the force of endearing motives to naked precepts, and thus allure an obedience which it might properly compel. True it is that the Sabbath was subsequently changed from the seventh, to the first day of the week, but this change of the day under the Christian dispensation, makes no essential difference in the character of the season, or of the duties which it demands. Additional considerations do indeed, connect themselves with the spiritual duties of the day, enforced by more solemn and sublime sanctions, but the essence of the institution is the devoting of *one seventh part* of our time to the more immediate service of God, and whether this comes on the seventh or the first day of the week is immaterial. It is plain from the drift of the passage that the Sabbath is to be regarded as a *commemorative institution*. Its stated recurrence was designed to remind our first parents of the finished work of creation and lead them to a devout contemplation of those perfections of the Deity which it displayed. And to place this consideration in its proper light, it is to be borne in mind, that at the



4 ¶ <sup>d</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and of the

d ch. 1. 1. Ps. 90. 1, 2

time of its first appointment, there was no Bible. The revelations which it records had not then been communicated. There was as yet no history of past times to illustrate the character of God, in the works of his providence. What is now called the book of nature, was therefore then the only book to which man had access. But with us the case is different. We have other things to celebrate with the periodical returns of this holy day. To us, it is the memorial of a finished redemption, as well as of a finished creation. While therefore, the primeval ends of the institution of the Sabbath hold equally with regard to us, and we are called to observe the day as a season of devout meditation and grateful remembrance of God, as the Creator and bountiful Benefactor of mankind, yet under the Christian dispensation, the day brings with it far more interesting associations, and the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and mediatorial reign of Christ, all lay claim to our contemplations, and our praises. This great work of the Saviour should in fact, constitute the main, the central theme of our meditations. Our services and devotions should have a special reference to him; for the day is now honoured by a designation that makes it peculiarly his—'the Lord's day.' On this day his resurrection occurred, and in commemorating that event, we are to look forward to the resurrection of believers, and their entrance upon the promised glory. Thus the Sabbath becomes to us, a prefigurative sign of the rest of heaven. We are to look upon it as a pledge of that eternal salvation, into which we may even now enter by the anticipations of faith, and place ourselves among the ransomed captives, returning to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon

earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

our heads.—¶ Which God created and made. Heb. ברא לעשות created to make, or to do. This, though different from our mode of expression, is an idiom of the original, implying its being done in the most perfect, excellent, and glorious manner. The word לעשות to make, or to do, is frequently subjoined to another word, to convey the idea of *intensity* or of the *utmost degree* of the action specified. Thus, Eccl. 2. 11, 'The labour that I had laboured to do (עמלתי לעשות).' Ps. 126. 2, 'The Lord hath done great things for them (הגדירל לעשות) hath magnified to do).' Judg. 13. 19, 'And the angel did wondrously (מפלא לעשות) wrought miraculously to do).'

4. Generations of the heavens and the earth. Heb. תולדות births. Events of whatever kind are sometimes said in scripture style to be *begotten*, as Prov. 27. 1, 'Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth (ירלך).' See also Ps. 90. 2. Hence the term 'generations' is nearly equivalent to *occurrences*, *incidents*, *things that happen to any one*. Gen. 6. 9. 'These are the generations of Noah,' i. e. the specially memorable events in the life of Noah. So Gen. 37. 2. Here the phrase, 'the generations of the heavens and the earth,' is equivalent to, 'the narrative of the remarkable events connected with the creation of the heavens and the earth;' referring to the account given in the first chapter. The Septuagint renders it, 'The book of the Genesis,' &c., i. e. the book or history of the generations, &c.—¶ In the day. That is, in or at the time. See the scriptural usage in regard to this word illustrated in the note on ch. 1. 5.—¶ The Lord God made. Heb. יהוה אלהים Jehovah Elohim. A new title begins here to be applied to the Creator which

5 And every <sup>e</sup> plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not

<sup>f</sup> caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man <sup>g</sup> to till the ground.

e ch. 1. 12. Ps. 104. 14.

f Job 38. 26, 27, 28. g ch. 3. 23.

is kept up throughout this and the following chapter. The original יהוה *Jehovah* implies the eternal self-existence of the Most High, and his being the cause of all other existence. It is equivalent to the august name, Ex. 3. 14, I AM THAT I AM. The true import of the word is supposed to be declared, Rev. 1. 8, 'which is, and which was, and which is to come,' i. e. the everlasting; in accordance with which, Rab. Bechai, an ancient Jewish writer, says, 'These three times, past, present, and to come, are comprehended in this proper name, as is known to all.' Why a change in the appellation occurs here it is not easy to say. By some it is considered as strong evidence that this part of the narrative is from another hand than that of Moses. But by comparing the passage with Ex. 6. 3, 'And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them,' it may perhaps be safely maintained, that the title here is not used in allusion to his power like 'Elohim,' but to his *actually performing, finishing, or consummating* his works. 'As we find him known by his name *Jehovah* when he appeared to perform what he had promised, so now we have him known by that name when he had perfected what he had begun.' *Henry*. The Jews attach so much sanctity to this name, that in reading the Hebrew Scriptures, they never, with the single exception of Num. 6. 23, 27, pronounce it, but always substitute אדוני *Adonai*, another title which is frequently, but not exclusively, applied to the Deity, and which is also in our version rendered *Lord*. The Scriptures them-

selves, however, afford no warrant for this extreme scrupulousness. If it were lawful for Moses to *write* the name, it is doubtless lawful for us to *read* and to *speak* it, unless expressly forbidden.—As to the origin and import of the English word *Lord*, it is a derivative from the Anglo-Saxon *Hlaford*, afterwards contracted into *Loverd*, and finally into *Lord*; from *Hlaf*, *bread* (whence the English *loaf*) and *Ford*, *to give out, to supply*. *Lord*, therefore, implies the *giver of bread*, or him who *sustains and nourishes* his creatures. The title is highly expressive and appropriate when applied to the universal Benefactor, but it is on the whole to be regretted that the Anglicized *Jehovah* was not uniformly retained by our translators, wherever the original is יהוה *Jehovah*, as they would thus have avoided giving the same representative (*Lord*) to two different words in Hebrew, besides doing fuller justice to the sense of the original. But the example of rendering it into another language was first set by the Greek version of the Seventy. And this usage the writers of the New Testament have seen fit to adopt, always employing as its equivalent *κύριος kurios*, *Lord*, and thus establishing a precedent which all modern translators have felt safe in following.

5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth. That is, these are the generations, or this is the history, of the production of the plants and herbs, prior to the ordinary mode of propagation from the seed. They were produced in their full perfection, by a simple act of omnipotence, without going through the present established process of germination from a seed, or being at all indebted to the influence of rain, or



6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the LORD God formed

man of the <sup>h</sup> dust of the ground, and <sup>i</sup> breathed into his <sup>k</sup> nostrils the breath of life; and <sup>i</sup> man became a living soul.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 3. 19, 23. Ps. 103. 14. Eccl. 12. 7. Isa. 64. 8. 1 Cor. 15. 47. <sup>i</sup> Job 33. 4. Acts 17. 25. <sup>k</sup> ch. 7. 22. Isa. 2. 22. 11 Cor. 15. 45.

of human tillage. The Hebrew participle (טרם *terem*) rendered 'before' may mean 'not yet,' viz. 'and every plant of the field was *not yet* in the earth, and every herb of the field had *not yet* sprung up,' which substantially agrees with the former; the design of the writer being to enhance the wonder of such a production in the absence of all the natural causes which now contribute to it.

6. *But there went up a mist.* As this verse reads in our translation it is somewhat singularly introduced; at least, it is not easy to perceive its connection with the context, nor the precise design with which it is here inserted. Probably a more correct rendering of the words is, 'Neither had there gone up a mist,' &c. The Heb. copulative <sup>ו</sup> *and* is in repeated instances in the scriptures to be rendered *nor* when the preceding clause or sentence is negative. Thus, Ex. 20. 4, 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image *nor* (Heb. *and*) any likeness.' Ps. 44. 19, 'Our heart has not turned back from thee, *nor* (Heb. *and*) our steps declined from thy paths.' Is. 42. 8, 'My glory will I not give to another, *nor* (Heb. *and*) my praise to graven images.' The design is still to intimate that the process of vegetation, which usually requires the genial aid of rain or dew, was now miraculously effected without either. So far indeed from there having been a rain, not even a mist had arisen to which the result could be attributed. This rendering occurs in the Arab. version of Saadias and is adopted in that of Junius and Tremellius, which is, for the most part,

eminently distinguished for its fidelity to the original.

7. *Formed man of the dust of the ground.* Heb. האדם עפר מן האדמה *formed man dust of the ground*; i. e. made him to be of the same material as the dust of the ground, so that when he died it might be said that he returned or was resolved into dust. Strictly considered the creation of a living being from a preexisting inert substance can scarcely be distinguished from a creation out of nothing. The same degree of power is requisite in the one case as in the other.—¶ *Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* Heb. נשמת הירם *breath of lives*; intimating, as some have supposed, that man possesses the vegetative life of plants, the sensitive life of animals, and that higher rational life which distinguishes humanity. Still it is not certain that this is the import of the plural in this word, nor is it possible to say with confidence what is. As to the action here attributed to the Creator, we are not to suppose that any such process was actually performed by him as breathing into the nostrils of the inanimate clay which he had moulded into the human form. This is evidently spoken after the manner of men; and we are merely to understand by it a special act of omnipotence imparting the power of breathing or respiration to the animal fabric that he had formed, in consequence of which it became quickened and converted to a 'living soul,' that is, a living and sentient creature. This act is indicated by the phrase 'breathed into his nostrils,' because the function of respiration is chiefly visible in this part of

8 ¶ And the LORD God planted<sup>m</sup> a garden<sup>n</sup> eastward in

m ch. 13. 10. Isa. 51. 3. Ez. 28. 13. Joel 2. 3. n ch. 3. 24.

the human frame. The subject is still further considered in the next note. —¶ *Became a living soul.* Heb. *חַיָּה נִפְשָׁה* *became to a living soul*; an idiom of the original properly rendered in our version. The phrase 'living soul' is in the foregoing narrative repeatedly applied to the inferior orders of animals which are not considered to be possessed of a 'soul' in the sense in which that term is applied to man. It would seem to mean the same, therefore, when spoken of man that it does when spoken of beasts, viz. an animated being, a creature possessed of life and sensation, and capable of performing all the physical functions by which animals are distinguished, as eating, drinking, walking, &c. As to the intellectual faculties which raise man so far above the tribes of the brute creation, we find no term that expressly designates them in any part of the sacred narrative. The fact of his being possessed of them seems rather to be *implied* in what is said of his being made in the image of God, and in the greater degree of importance attached to the circumstances of his creation. Indeed it may be remarked that the Scriptures generally afford much less *explicit* evidence of the existence of a sentient immaterial principle in man, capable of living and acting separate from the body, than is usually supposed. Yet favoured as the idea is by so many analogies of nature and by such strong inductions of reason, it would be presumptuous to deny the existence of such a principle, even though the Scriptures had been entirely silent on the subject.

8 *The Lord God planted a garden.* Rather 'had planted,' i. e. at some time previous. The place of residence was fitted up before the intended occupant was introduced into it. The original

• Eden; and there<sup>p</sup> he put the man whom he had formed.

o ch. 4. 16. 2 Kings 19. 12. Ez. 27. 23. p v. 15

word for 'garden,' which properly signifies an *enclosure*, from a root denoting *protection*, is rendered in the Sept. by *Παραδείσος* a *paradise*, a term however not of Greek or Hebrew, but of Arabic or Persian origin, used to denote a *park*, pleasure-garden, or woodland enclosure, surrounded by a wall, watered by running streams, and abounding with fruit and flower trees, and other objects fitted to regale the senses. Thus Xenoph. *Æconom.* IV. 13, 'The king of Persia takes particular care, wherever he is, to have *gardens* or *enclosures*, which are called *Paradises*, full of every thing beautiful and good that the earth can produce.' The term at length by a natural process came to be applied to any peculiarly fertile or delightful region, and was introduced into the later Hebrew in the form of פֶּרֶדֶס *Pardes*, in which it occurs Neh. 2. 8, rendered 'forest,' and Eccl. 2. 5. Cant. 4. 3, rendered 'orchard.' From its denoting a place abounding with enchanting scenery, and one which in the case of our first parents was the abode of innocence and bliss, it became in process of time a metaphorical appellation of heaven, the seat of the blessed, 1 Cor. 12. 4. Luke, 23. 43. The import of the Heb. עֵדֶן *Eden* is *pleasure*, intimating the superior beauty of the region known by that name. As to the true site of this primitive abode of man, though it has been the subject of almost endless discussion among the learned, it is still involved in great obscurity, and an approximation to truth is perhaps all that is to be expected as the result of the most careful inquiry. It may, we think, be safely assumed that the name *Eden* designates a place or region which was so denominated in the time of Moses, rather than at the time of its occupation

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow <sup>a</sup>every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; <sup>r</sup>the tree of

life also in the midst of the garden, <sup>a</sup>and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>q</sup> Ezek. 31. 8. - <sup>r</sup> ch. 3. 22. Prov. 3. 18. & 11. 30. Rev. 2. 7. & 22. 2, 14.

<sup>s</sup> ver. 17.

by its first happy tenants; for why should it then have been distinguished by a name at all? Geographical distinctions naturally and necessarily arise from the settlement of the globe by its inhabitants, but cannot well be conceived as existing prior to such periods, unless the name were given by God himself, for which we can see no sufficient reason. The same remark may be made of the rivers and the other places mentioned in this connection. They are doubtless to be considered as post-diluvian and not as ante-diluvian names. The site of Eden therefore is to be determined by determining, as far as possible, the respective positions of the adjacent streams and regions, an attempt at which is made in a subsequent note.

—¶ *Eastward in Eden.* Heb. מִקְדָּם בְּעֵדֶן *in Eden from, or at, the east, or eastward.* Eden, we suppose, was a region of very considerable extent, while the garden was a smaller tract embraced within its limits. The object of the sacred writer here appears to be to indicate the position of the garden, not only in reference to the country in which Moses dwelt when the history was written, but also in reference to the territory of Eden itself; it was situated in the *easterly* part of that highly favored land. That this was a widely extended region is to be inferred not only from what is said of the several rivers by which it was bounded or traversed, but from the fact that several places of the name of Eden, yet remote from each other, lay a traditional claim to having been the primeval seat of the human race. Probably the correct mode of adjusting these claims is to suppose that the original Eden was a

region sufficiently large to have embraced them all.

9. *Every tree that was pleasant to the sight.* The garden of Eden, which had been planted by the hand of God himself for the residence of the happy beings he had created, was, as its name imports, the centre of every terrestrial pleasure. The bounty of the Creator had stored it with every plant and flower and tree, that was pleasant to the eye, grateful to the smell, or adapted to the sustenance of life. In addition to this, ample and refreshing streams of water, so necessary to the very existence of an oriental garden, diffused a perpetual verdure over its whole extent, and imparted to every plant, a beauty, vigour, and fertility, perhaps unknown in any other district of the globe. Among these goodly productions of the garden, two of remarkable character and use are distinctly specified. The first was the 'tree of life,' an appellation denoting, in addition to its spiritual or moral import, a *living tree*, just as 'oath of bond,' is equivalent to 'binding oath;' 'words of grace,' to 'gracious words;' 'vessel of choice,' to 'chosen vessel,' &c. It was probably a tree or class of trees, of the evergreen species, continually flourishing and fruitful, from its possessing an undecaying vitality. To this tree there is evident allusion in the description of the heavenly paradise, Rev. 22. 2, in which was the 'tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.' In both cases it may be presumed that the trees were named, in part at least, from their common inherent property of perennial fruit-bearing. But this by no means exhausts the full import of the

appellation. The *tree of life* in Eden, undoubtedly conveyed to Adam, by the express appointment of the Creator, a symbolical meaning, serving as a visible sign or pledge of the continuance to him of a blessed natural life, as long as he should continue obedient. Regarded in this light he undoubtedly often ate of the fruit of the tree before his fall, not perhaps as a means of sustaining life, or of making him immortal, but *sacramentally*, as Christians now eat of the Lord's supper, to confirm their faith in the divine promises, and as a symbol of spiritual blessings imparted to the soul.—¶ *In the midst of the garden.* Heb. *בְּתוֹךְ הַגָּן*. The phrase 'in the midst,' as used by the sacred writers, often signifies merely *within* certain limits, without implying an exactly central position. Thus Gen. 41. 43. Heb. 'In the midst of the same (city);' Eng. in the same. Job, 2. 8, (Heb.) 'He sat down in the midst of the ashes;' Eng. among the ashes. Luke, 8. 7, (Gr.) 'Fell in the midst of thorns;' Eng. among thorns. In like manner all that is implied here probably is, that the tree of life grew *within* the precincts of the garden, while it was not found without. This is confirmed by Gen. 3. 22, 23, where the reason given for the man's being driven out of the garden is, 'lest he should put forth his hand and take of the tree of life;' from which the inference is natural, that the tree did not grow *without* the garden.—¶ *Tree of knowledge of good and evil.* Gr. 'The tree of knowing that which may be known of good and evil.' Chal. 'The tree of whose fruit they that eat shall know the difference between good and evil.' These paraphrases give the sense of the expression. The tree was so called because, being appointed as a test of obedience, Adam by eating of its fruit, would acquire the knowledge of good by *losing* it, and of evil by *experiencing* it. The term *knowledge* in the idiom of the Scriptures usually carries with it the idea not only of

simple intelligence, but also of a *practical feeling or experimental sense* of the thing known. Thus Ps. 101. 4, 'I will not *know* a wicked person;' i. e. I will not have complacency in him. Mat. 7. 23, 'Then will I profess unto them, I never *knew* you;' i. e. I never approved of you. Rom. 7. 7, 'I had not *known* sin but by the law;' i. e. had not experimentally known it.—In the above remarks we have given what we conceive to be, on the whole, the most correct interpretation of the phrase, 'tree of knowledge of good and evil.' At the same time it is, perhaps, but just to advert to an objection urged against this sense of the words by the learned Vitranga, who seldom advances an opinion that is not entitled to great respect. He argues, that 'to know good and evil,' in the language of Scripture, is to *understand* the nature of good and evil, of right and wrong, not to *experience* it; and that the tree therefore could not have been so named proleptically from the event. For although by the fall the original pair had indeed full experience of *sin* and *misery*, yet how could it be said that they thereby acquired the knowledge of *good*? If it be answered 'by contrast,' the experience of evil having taught them the value of those blessings which they had lost, this implies that they were previously unacquainted with good; and not only so, but that they experienced good by an event from which they only derived evil. This is indeed a specious objection, and has led some commentators to understand by the appellation *a tree which was the test of good and evil; a tree by which our first parents would be tried whether they would be good or bad, or by which it would appear whether they would obey or disobey the commands of their Creator.* From the whole tenor of the history it would appear, it is said, that the tree of knowledge was appointed to be the test of Adam's fidelity to his Creator, and consequently was so called *from*

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden: and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

*God's knowing by the result* whether he would cleave to good or make choice of evil. This view of the import of the terms it would not perhaps be very easy to set aside, were it not for the language of ch. 3. 22, 'Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.' Here the 'knowing' is clearly attributed to Adam and not to God, and as this was the result of eating of that particular tree, we know not how to avoid the conclusion that such is the meaning of the appellation, viz. that it was a tree by which Adam should *know*, instead of *being known*.—It is not perhaps necessary to suppose that there were barely two individual trees of the species abovementioned. The term *tree* is repeatedly used as a noun of multitude, implying *many trees* (see on Gen. 3. 2), and we suppose that the trees here spoken of were in fact *two distinct species of trees*, which the Creator saw fit to appropriate to this peculiar use. They were probably interspersed here and there throughout the garden, so that Adam in traversing the delightful region would frequently meet with them, and thus be constantly reminded of the terms on which he held his happiness. While he was at full liberty to pluck and enjoy the fruit of the one, he was to consider himself forbidden by the most awful sanctions from putting forth his hand to the other.

10. *A river went out of Eden to water the garden.* The language here is peculiar, and such as we should scarcely expect, if the common opinion respecting the topography of the garden be correct. For as the garden itself was *within* the limits of Eden, why should it be said that a river *went out of Eden* in order to water it? This can only be explained on the supposition that Eden, compared with the garden, was so large a tract of country,

that it might be said, that the river or rivers flowed out of it, which in their course ran through the Paradisaic enclosure. With Michaelis, Jahn, and other distinguished critics, we are inclined to consider the word 'river,' here as a collective singular for the plural, one of the commonest idioms of the Hebrew, implying that not one only, but a number of rivers, viz. the four afterwards specified, flowed in different directions about the garden or through it. We are led to this conclusion from the extreme difficulty of identifying any place in the region of the Euphrates which answers fully to the localities here given.—After all, it is, we think, not improbable that the word rendered 'went out' really implies *rising* or *springing out* of the ground, the design of Moses being here simply to inform the reader that these rivers *originated* in the district of Eden, and consequently afforded an abundant source of irrigation. 'That the Heb. term *יָצָא* to go forth is used in the sense of *issuing* or *springing forth* from the earth, especially as applied to plants, and streams of water is unquestionable. See 1 Kings, 5. 13. Is. 11. 1. Job, 14. 2. Deut. 8. 7. Is. 41. 18. —*יָצָא From thence it was parted.* Heb.

*רַמְשֵׁם יַרְדֵּן*. If but a single river be here intended, the partition spoken of must have commenced immediately upon its leaving the garden, and at the same time not very far from its mouth; for although it is not unusual for a large river to discharge itself by several distinct outlets into the sea, like the Nile and the Ganges, yet it is very seldom that it is found thus dividing itself in the midst of its course, and far in the interior of the country through which it flows. But it utterly confounds all that is known of eastern geography to make the Euphrates and the Tigris short



11 The name of the first *is* Pison: that *is* it which compasseth

the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold;

u ch. 25. 18.

branches of a larger river on which the garden was situated. We are constrained, therefore, to reject the idea of but a *single river* being intended. We adopt also the opinion, that the phrase 'from thence' (מִשָּׁם *mishsham*) is indicative rather of *time* than of *place*; a sense which it undoubtedly has in the following among other passages, Hos. 2. 15, 'And I will give her vineyards *from thence* (מִשָּׁם), i. e. from that time, afterwards. Is. 65. 20, 'There shall be no more *thence* (מִשָּׁם) an infant of days,' i. e. from that time. Thus interpreted the historian's meaning is simply, that from the beginning four considerable rivers, including the three principal in central Asia, flowed over or along the pleasant land of Eden, by means of which, or some of their branches, the enclosure of the garden was watered and fertilized; that at the time of which he speaks neither the region of Eden, nor the rivers themselves were distinguished by names; but that *afterwards* (מִשָּׁם) at a period indefinitely subsequent, geographical distinctions arose, the extensive tract was divided into minor portions, and the rivers were 'parted,' that is, *assigned in geographical reckoning* to particular districts or territories embraced in the larger original whole. These rivers thus 'parted' were afterwards known by the names which he proceeds to specify, and by the designation of which he would help the reader to understand the true topography of the primitive Eden. As to a physical partition or division of a single river into different channels or courses, it is by no means necessarily implied in the import of the original word. It is the proper term for expressing that kind of *conventional allotment* which we understand by it. See note on Gen. 25. 23.—¶ *Became into four heads.* That is, came to be

known or distinguished as four *principal* rivers, four *capital* streams; a prevailing sense of the word 'head' in the original, denoting the *chief* or *principal* of any thing to which it is applied. As to the sense of *sources* or *fountain-heads*, it is supported by no instance whatever of such an usage. It is here clearly synonymous with 'river,' as appears from v. 13, where it is said that 'the name of the second river'—one of the abovementioned *heads*—'is Gihon.'

11. *The name of the first is Pison.* The name of the first river, not the first head, v. 13. It was so called from the *multitude, increase, or volume* of its waters. Accordingly, the author of Ecclesiasticus, ch. 24. 25, in allusion to this etymology, says of God, 'He filleth all things with his wisdom as *Pison*.' As the names of the two first rivers here mentioned have long since become obsolete, they can only be determined by settling the locality of the countries to which they are adjacent, and even this is a matter of no small difficulty from our yet imperfect knowledge of the geography of the East.—¶ *Which compasseth.* The original word does not always signify to *encircle* or *surround*, but sometimes merely to *pass along by the side of, to meander* or *wind its way through*. It occurs Josh. 15. 3 and 6. 16, where it is properly rendered *passed along* and *passed by*; in which sense it is probably to be taken here.—¶ *The whole land of Havilah.* So called from the name of its first and most distinguished occupant, like 'land of Ashur,' 'land of Edom,' 'land of Zebulun,' &c. all so named from the individuals by whom they were settled. There were two persons of the name of Havilah, one the son of Cush, the son of Ham, Gen. 10. 7, whose territory lay in Arabia, near the Persian Gulf, Gen. 25. 18. 1 Sam.



12 And the gold of that land is good : <sup>w</sup> there is bdellium and the onyx-stone.

w Numb. 11. 7.

13 And the name of the second river is Gihon : the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

15. 17. But from the absence of any river of note in this region, though it was indeed somewhat distinguished for its treasures of gold and precious stones, it is hardly probable that this is the Havilah here intended. The other person of this name, Gen. 10. 29, was the son of Joktan of the race of Shem. His possessions fell to him to the east of Persia in the country watered by the Indus, in or near the region afterwards termed *Cabul*, which might, through the oriental pronunciation, be easily derived from *Havilah*. He was brother to Ophir, whose land was celebrated for gold, and the English editor of Calmet, with other eminent geographers, is of opinion that the ships of Solomon in sailing to Ophir ascended the Indus. The two brothers may be supposed to have settled near together, and if so, the hypothesis is very probable, that the ancient Pison was no other than the modern Indus. And how well this river is entitled to the appellation of *abundant* will appear from the remarks of Mr. Burnes who has devoted a chapter to a comparison of the Indus and the Ganges in respect to the quantity of water which they severally discharge into the sea. 'It appears from Mr. G. A. Prinsep's essay, that in the month of April, the Ganges discharges, at Sicriguli, about 21,500 cubic feet of water in a second. The average breadth of the river at that place is given at 5000 feet, which is also the velocity in a second of time: while its average depth does not exceed three feet. In the middle of April, I found the Indus at Tatta to have a breadth of 670 yards, and to be running with a velocity of two miles and a half an hour. It happens that the banks are steep on both sides of the river in this part of its

course: so that the soundings, which amount to fifteen feet, are regular from shore to shore, if we except a few yards on either side, where the water is still. This data would give a discharge of 110,500 cubic feet per second; but by Buat's equations for the diminished velocity of the stream near the bed, compared with that of the surface, it would be decreased to 93,465 cubic feet. Some further deduction should be made for the diminished depth towards the shores: and 80,000 cubic feet per second may be taken as a fair rate of discharge of the Indus in the month of April. From what has been above stated, it will be seen that the Indus, in discharging the enormous volume of 80,000 cubic feet of water in a second, exceeds by *four times* the size of the Ganges in the dry season, and nearly equals the great American river, the Mississippi.' *Travels into Bokhara*, Vol. I. pp. 137, 138. On the east, therefore, we consider the land of Eden to have extended to the borders of India, and in accordance with this the Targum of Jonathan renders the verse, 'The name of the first river is Phison, which environs (i. e. runs along) the whole land of India, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is excellent.'

12. *The gold of that land is good.* That is, fine, precious, of superlative excellence. Thus 2 Chron. 3. 5, 'And the greater house he ceiled with fir-tree, which he overlaid with *fine gold* (Heb. *good gold*).'<sup>¶</sup> There is *bdellium*. Heb. *בדלה* *bedolahh*. Of the many opinions respecting the true import of the original Hebrew term the most probable is, that it stands for the *pearl*. Some indeed contend for its being a resinous aromatic gum, exuding from certain species of tree, and used as in-

cense for burning. But we adopt the former opinion, not only because the *bdellium* is here mentioned along with gold and precious gems, but for another still weightier reason. Moses describing the manna Num. 11. 7, says that 'it was like the seed of coriander, and the colour thereof as the colour of *bdellium*.' But we know from another passage Ex. 16. 14, 31, that the manna was white, which corresponds with the colour of the *pearl*. But neither the round shape of the coriander seed nor the white colour of the manna correspond with the aromatic gum which has received the name of *bdellium*. The *pearl* therefore is undoubtedly meant; and it is well known that the shores of the Persian gulf and the Indian ocean, along which the province of Havelah lay, produce finer pearls and in greater abundance than any other place in the world.—¶ *And the onyx-stone.* Heb. שֹׁהָם *shoham*. All that is known with certainty of this substance is, that it was a precious stone, probably a kind of flesh-coloured agate, resembling the human nail; whence it is rendered in the Greek οὐνύ *onyx*, i. e. nail. It is elsewhere translated *beryl*, and was one of the gems in which the names of the twelve tribes were engraven and borne on the breast-plate of the High Priest, Ex. 28. 9, 10.

13. *The name of the second river is Gihon.* A name importing in the original eruption of waters. The identity of this river, like that of the former, can be determined only by fixing the site of the country to which it was contiguous.—¶ *The same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.* Heb. 'land of Cush.' Our English translators, following the example of the Septuagint, have generally rendered *Cush* by *Ethiopia*, as though but one country were intended. Such however is not the fact, and a want of attention to this will involve some places of Scripture in inextricable confusion. As the different descendants of Cush, the

son of Ham, spread themselves, by various removals, over countries widely separated from each other, the general term appears to have been employed by the Hebrews to denote *all the countries of the south*, an extensive region spreading along the southern coast of Asia, from the Persian gulf westward, and the eastern coast of Africa, embracing particularly all those races of people distinguished by the black or dusky colour of their skin; a characteristic pointed out in the very etymology of the word *Ethiop*, which signifies *dark face*. The name of the country therefore is well rendered by Luther *Mohrenland*, i. e. *the land of the blacks*, as it appears from a passage in Jeremiah, ch. 13. 23, 'Can the Ethiopian (Heb. Cushite) change his skin?' that the term *Cushite* was synonymous with 'man of colour.' Of these the inhabitants of Egypt and East Africa generally were the most remarkable, and though many of the race were settled in the southern parts of Arabia along the coasts of the Red sea, we seem to be guided by this circumstance to fix upon the Nile as the river intended by the Gihon: and it is a circumstance peculiarly worthy of notice, that the editor of Calmet remarks in the article on the 'Nile,' that 'the inhabitants of the kingdom of Goiam call this river Gihon.' (*Robinson's Calmet*, p. 702). This view of the subject, it is admitted, represents the ancient Eden as a very widely extended territory, reaching from the Indus on the east, to the Nile and the Mediterranean on the west, and including the intermediate countries. But we perceive nothing in the letter of the narrative or the reason of the thing which compels us to regard it as peculiarly small, nor do we think it possible, without violently wresting the language of Moses and assuming the most gratuitous hypotheses, to make the tract of Eden any other than a large one. As to the garden itself, the reader may, if he chooses, conceive it to have been

14 And the name of the third river is <sup>x</sup> Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

x Dan. 10. 4.

a district of only a few miles or even acres in extent.—Since penning the above, the writer has had the pleasure to find that nearly every position here taken in regard to the topography of Eden is unequivocally confirmed by the authority of the eminent lexicographer Gesenius. He too maintains that the Pison is the Indus, the Gihon the Nile, and that Havilah was situated on the borders of India. See the articles in his Lexicon on these different names.

14. *The name of the third river is Hiddekel.* This is compounded of two words implying *lightness* and *velocity*, and pointing consequently to a stream distinguished by a rapid current. That such is the Tigris, universally understood to be meant by the Hiddekel, appears from the testimony of both ancient and modern writers. Pliny expressly says, 'The Tigris is so called from its *celerity*.' In the oriental versions it is called *Diglath* or *Diklath*, of which the derivation is thus traced from Hiddekel;—Heb. Hiddekel; Syr. Hidkalto, whence by dropping the first syllable, Dekalto; whence Diglitho, Diglith, Diglath; from Diglath or Diglith comes Tiglith, Tigrith, Tigris, the *l* and *r*, and *th* and *s* in the oriental languages being frequently interchanged for each other. This river, as is well known, is a branch of the Euphrates. A particular description must be sought from the works of geographers.—¶ *Which goeth toward the east of Assyria.* Rather, Heb. קדמת אשור *goeth before Ashur or Assyria.* The Tigris does not run toward the east of the region of Assyria, but washes it on the west, and

15 And the LORD God took the man, and <sup>y</sup> put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.

y ver. 8.

therefore in respect to the place where Moses wrote may be said to have been *before* it, which is in several instances the undoubted sense of the original.—¶ *The fourth river is Euphrates.* Heb. פרת *Pherath*, whence it is universally called by the present inhabitants of the East the *Phrat*. The name 'Euphrates' is supposed to be compounded of two words 'Hu' and 'Pherath' (Heb. חרא פרת) signifying 'this is Pherath,' as if in answer to a question respecting the name of the river. This was too noted a stream in the time of Moses to require any additional specification, and therefore he says nothing about the countries which it bordered, as he does of the others. The Euphrates is frequently called in the Scriptures by way of emphasis 'the river,' and 'the great river,' Ps. 72. 8. Deut. 1. 7.—If the view above given of the topography of Eden be correct, it will be seen that it embraced the fairest portion of Asia besides a part of Africa, comprising the countries at present known as Cabul, Persia, Armenia, Kurdistan, Syria, Arabia, Abyssinia, and Egypt. The garden, however, which is said to have been 'eastward in Eden,' was probably situated somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, probably not far from the site of Babylon, a region nearer its eastern than its western limits; but the exact position it is probably vain to attempt to determine.

15. *The Lord God took the man.* The historian now resumes the thread of the narrative, which had been broken off v. 7, in order to introduce, by way of parenthesis, the description of

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 <sup>a</sup> But of the tree of the

z ver. 9.

knowledge of good and evil, <sup>a</sup> thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof <sup>b</sup> thou shalt surely die.

a ch. 3. 1, 3, 11, 17. b ch. 3. 3, 19. Rom. 6. 23. 1 Cor. 15. 56. Jam. 1. 15. 1 John 5. 16.

the garden and its localities. By God's *taking* the man is to be understood, not a physical lifting him up and putting him down in the garden, but simply his *exercising an influence upon him* which induced him, in the exercise of his free agency, to go. He went in consequence of a secret impulse or an open command of his Maker. So it is said Josh. 24. 3, of Abraham's leaving the place of his nativity, that God *took* him and led him into Canaan. See note in loc.—<sup>א</sup> *And put him into the garden.*

Heb. <sup>א</sup> *made him to stay, or abide;* somewhat improperly rendered 'put.'

—<sup>א</sup> *To dress it and to keep it.* That is, to till, to cultivate the ground, to bestow labour in sowing, planting, rearing, and training the various vegetable productions which might be necessary for his subsistence, or tend to beautify still farther the paradise of pleasure in which he was placed. Man, even in a state of innocence and surrounded by all the external sources of happiness was not to pass his time in indolent repose. By the very constitution of his animal frame, exercise of some kind was absolutely essential to him, and a peculiar honor is put upon the pursuits of agriculture by their being appointed as the occupation of the head of the human race in his primeval state. Simple labour in the tillage of the earth was not a part of the curse incurred by transgression, but was the destiny of man from the first. It was labouring in toil and sorrow, exhausting and wearing out the physical energies by the hardships of the field, which constituted the bitterness of that part of

Adam's sentence. His labour otherwise would have been a mere pleasant recreation. By his being appointed to 'keep' as well as to 'dress' the garden, may be meant either that he was to *guard* it from the depredations of the wilder class of beasts, or, in a different sense, *to preserve it, to maintain possession of it*, by continuing obedient and not doing any thing to forfeit it. Viewed in this light, the precept must be taken in immediate connection with what follows.

16. *The Lord God commanded the man.* Although the creation of the woman has not yet been expressly detailed, it is still evident from the result that she also was embraced in the prohibition, and this makes it probable that the prohibition itself was not given till after her formation. The exact order of time is frequently departed from in the sacred narrative, and probably in the present instance. It would seem that the work of the sixth day was, (1.) The creation of Adam and the placing him in the garden. (2.) The bringing before him the animal tribes that he might bestow upon them appropriate names. (3.) The creation of the woman. (4.) The grant of all the trees of the garden for food with the exception of the one here forbidden. But the last is apparently by way of anticipation mentioned out of its due order.

17. *Thou shalt not eat of it.* By this prohibition the Creator saw fit to appoint a *special test* of obedience to the creature he had formed. Although by the very law of his nature he was bound to love, honour, and obey his Maker,

18 ¶ And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should*

be alone; ° I will make him an help meet for him.

c ch. 3. 12. 1 Cor. 11. 9. 1 Tim. 2. 13.

and was moreover disposed to do it, yet as an intimation of God's sovereign dominion over all his works, and to give to Adam a still more impressive sense of his dependance, he was pleased to adopt the method of *positive institution* or *arbitrary enactment*, by which to make trial of his obedience as a free moral agent. This was a proceeding altogether wise in itself, worthy of God, and advantageous to man; for the inference would seem to be inevitable, that in case he had stood the test and come out steadfast from the appointed ordeal, his rewards would have been proportioned to the conflict, and that he, together with his posterity, would have been confirmed in a holy and happy state secure from ever afterwards falling by transgression. As to the particular injunction laid upon Adam, it has indeed often been cavilled at as absurd and derogatory to the Supreme Being. But as the perfections of the Deity demand obedience from all his rational creatures, *something* must have been enjoined upon our first parents as a test of their fidelity. It could not, however, be any moral obligation like those in the Decalogue, there being no opportunity under the circumstances in which man was placed in Paradise, of violating the *moral law*; and the command not to eat of a particular tree was an easy prohibition, when free indulgence in all other fruits was granted; while it was a suitable test of Adam's fidelity, inasmuch as it was placed in the garden with him, and gave him every moment an opportunity of testifying his obedience by abstaining from it. The infringement of this injunction was therefore an act of direct rebellion against the sovereign authority of the Creator, and was accordingly *justly*

punished with all the evil results that followed.—¶ *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Heb. מֵת תָּמוּת *dying thou shalt die.* Gr. 'Thou shalt die the death.' Implying by the utmost emphasis of expression the absolute certainty of the punishment denounced. The threatening we suppose to have embraced all the evils spiritual, temporal, and eternal, which we learn elsewhere to be included in term *death* as a punishment for sin. The meaning is not that temporal death should be inflicted the same literal day on which the offence was committed, but on the day of his eating he was to become *dead* in trespasses and sins; the seeds of decay and dissolution were to become sown in his body, which should thenceforth become *mortal*, and finally be brought down to the grave; and he should be made liable to what is usually understood by the pains of *eternal death* in another world. Adam, indeed, might not at the time have understood the full import of this dreadful sentence, having had no experience of any thing which would enable him to do so; but *we* are taught by the actual result what sense to affix to the terms. It is an awful character of sin that it draws after it consequences of which the perpetrator is often very little aware, and which nothing but the doleful event can fully disclose.

18. *Not good that man should be alone.* Heb. כֹּל טוֹב הִיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַד *not good is the being of the man in his separation, or solitary state.* As man was originally formed with organs, faculties, and affections adapted to social intercourse, the Creator saw that it was not *good*, i. e. not fit nor convenient, not consistent with his highest happiness, nor with the pur-



19 ° And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and ' brought *them* unto Ad-

e ch. 1. 20, 24. f Ps. 8. 6. See ch. 6. 20.

poses connected with his creation, that he should remain in dreary solitude, a stranger to the blessings of society, having none with whom to share the sweet interchange of thought and feeling, or to partake the cares, occupations, and comforts of life. Indeed it is scarcely possible to conceive how, with the constitution God had given him, it would have been possible for man to have been happy in Eden itself if left to a state of utter loneliness. The Creator, therefore, kindly purposed to fill this dreary void, to complete what was wanting to the felicity of his creature, in the formation of a being like himself and every way suited to the exigencies of his condition.—¶ *An help meet for him.* An help or companion suitable for him. The exact rendering of the original is, 'An help as before him,' i. e. one corresponding to him, one adapted to him, a counterpart of himself, one like him in person, disposition, and affection, united to him in the tenderest ties, always present before him to aid, sympathise with, and comfort him; in a word, a second self. Such was the merciful provision which the Most High determined to make for man that his cup of innocent bliss might be full.—'This is the polite way of speaking of a wife in the East, though it must be confessed that they associate with this term too much of the idea of a servant. Does an aged person advise a young friend to get married; he will not say, 'Seek for a wife,' but 'Try to procure a *thunive*, an help meet.' A man who repines at his single state, says, 'I have not any female *help* in my house.' A widower says, 'Ah! my children, I have now

am to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.

no female *help*.' A man, wishing to say something to his wife, will address her as follows: 'My *help* meet, hear what I am going to say.' It is worthy of observation, that the margin has for *help meet*, 'as before him;' and this gives a proper view of her condition, for she literally has to *stand before* her husband to serve him on all occasions, and especially when he takes his food; she being then his servant. Say to a woman, 'Leave thy husband!' she will reply, 'No, no; I will *stand before* him.' *Roberts.*

19. *Out of the ground the Lord God formed.* Or Heb. 'had formed.' This verse and the following seem to be inserted here, immediately prior to the account of the woman's formation, in order to intimate the necessity there was for a new creation to supply Adam's lack of a companion. On a survey of all the animal tribes there was none found suitable for the purpose. With this, however, was connected another reason, to wit, the naming of the animals, which is especially mentioned.—¶ *Brought them unto Adam.* That is, conducted them by a secret supernatural impulse, as they were afterwards brought to Noah to be gathered into the ark. This like most other parts of the narrative of the creation, has been the subject of infidel cavil. It being ascertained, say the objectors, that animals are exclusively adapted to the respective regions which they inhabit, it would be contrary to their nature to leave their indigenous climates, and they would not assemble at one place. Of course, the account cannot be received as a literal fact, but must be understood in some mytholo-



gical or figurative sense. Thus a modern materialist and skeptic asserts, 'that the representations of all animals being brought before Adam in the first instance, and subsequently of their being all collected in the ark, if we are to understand them as applied to the living inhabitants of the whole world, are zoologically impossible.' *Lawrence's Lectures on Physiology*, § 2, c. i. p. 130. If by the expression 'zoologically impossible' it be only intended that such a concourse of animals could not be effected by their own natural instincts, no one will doubt the assertion. Supposing—what by the way really remains to be proved—that there was then the same diversity of climate that exists now, we may admit that those peculiar to the polar regions, and to the torrid zone, would certainly never assemble in any one spot without an immediate exertion of divine power. But he, at whose word the immense variety of living animals burst into being, could surely bring them together, and, when so congregated, could easily have supplied them with the means of support. Till it can be shown that the Deity could not perform, or that there could be no sufficient reasons for performing, such a miracle, objections of this nature can have no weight. But we may be content to take less elevated ground, and to understand the passage in a restricted signification. The Heb. word כּל *kol*, *all*, it is well known, does not invariably mean *all* in the largest sense, but sometimes *many* or *much*; and that it was designed to be received with some limitation in the present case is evident from the fishes of the sea not being specified, and the inutility of giving names to such animals as were to inhabit distant regions of the globe, and which Adam might never afterwards see. It is also uncertain whether the assemblage consisted of those only which were within the precincts of the garden of Eden, or inclu-

ded others; inasmuch as the expression, 'every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air,' may only denote the field and climate of Paradise. As to the reasons of such a proceeding, it may have fulfilled a number of benevolent purposes, though not particularly mentioned by the sacred historian. (1.) It might have been the means of assuring Adam of the power and dominion over the animal creation with which he was invested by his Maker; for when he beheld various species of beasts thus coming to crouch at his feet, to sport and gambol before him, he might conclude that they were innoxious, and subjected to his authority by an overruling power. (2.) By such an appointment the Almighty might design to give him such a knowledge of their nature and properties as was requisite in his peculiar situation in the infancy of the world. Had he remained ignorant of the ends which they were intended to serve, he could not have used them to any beneficial or valuable purposes. Many years must have rolled away before he could have learned this by experience; and it might therefore suit the benignity of the Divine Being to communicate to Adam how his dominion over the creatures was to be exercised, and how their powers and qualities might be made subservient to the comfort and convenience of man. (3.) It seems plainly intimated by the historian that the assembling of so many animals together was in part designed to convince Adam of his solitary condition, and of the necessity of a partner to the completion of his happiness. The various species of creatures doubtless came in pairs; he saw them adapted to each other in external form and identity of instincts, while for himself 'there was not found an help meet for him.' Though lord of the creation, yet panting for something unpossessed; though surrounded with living creatures, yet feeling the listlessness of solitude, he would discern that

he alone was destitute of a companion, a cheerless and lonely hermit roving amidst a wilderness of delights. And when he received from the bounty of heaven his new-created bride, he would be impelled to increased veneration of his beneficent Creator. (4.) The imposition of names upon the animal creation by their new master, might likewise be intended to call into play the vocal powers with which he was endowed. He must early have acquired the use of language, as an associate would have been given him in vain, unless they could have communicated with each other through the medium of speech; they would have been deprived of all the pleasures arising from rational and social intercourse. If language was heaven-taught, and certainly the human faculties appear unequal to its invention, no period agrees so well with the revelation as that when Adam formed the vocabulary of the living creatures.—In the above enumeration we may not have assigned all the real reasons for bringing a part of the animal creation to Adam for the purpose specified, but we have stated enough to convince us, that, so far from being objectionable, it was an instance of God's indulgent care and tenderness to the first man; and consequently that it cannot be urged against the literal interpretation of the history. —¶ *To see what he would call them.* Heb. יקרא לו *call him or it*, i. e. each one of them; an act which implies his being invested with sovereignty over them, as is plain from what is said of bestowing names, Dan 1. 7. Num. 32. 38, 42. The phrase, 'to see what he would call them,' may be understood either of God or of Adam. If the first, it is spoken after the manner of men, implying not that he would thereby receive any new information, but simply that a demonstration would be made of the extraordinary wisdom and sagacity of his creature, one which should strikingly impress all future

generations. If the second, the meaning evidently is, that they were brought to Adam *that he might see* by deeply contemplating them, by attentively studying their nature and properties, by observing the peculiar habits and instincts of the several species, how they were most appropriately to be named. To do this correctly so shortly after his creation would seem to have required a stretch of intelligence absolutely miraculous, and we deem it not unlikely that he was supernaturally assisted in doing it. However this may be, it is strenuously contended by Bochart and others, that the names of the animal tribes which we meet with in the Hebrew Scriptures are the same that Adam gave them at the beginning, and these, as is well known, are for the most part significant. Josephus says, 'God brought to Adam the several species of animals exhibiting them to him male and female, and he imposed upon them the names by which they are even now called.' So long, however, as the question respecting the claims of the Hebrew to being the primitive language remains encompassed with all the difficulties which modern researches in comparative philology have thrown around it, this can be regarded only as an hypothesis, venerable indeed for its antiquity, but lacking in that clear evidence which alone can command belief in reflecting minds. In fact the whole subject of language, its origin, development, diversities, &c. is one which, from its peculiarly subtle and complex nature, is perhaps more calculated to task the powers of the human intellect than any other which comes within the range of its inquiries. A bare entrance has as yet been made upon it, as a theme of philosophical investigation. —¶ *And whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name of it.* This is but another mode of saying, that Adam's choice of names entirely met the divine approbation, so that no necessity

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a <sup>g</sup> deep sleep to fall upon Adam,

g ch. 15. 12. 1 Sam. 26. 12.

existed for changing them in any respect. It was therefore a virtual attestation to the wonderful wisdom and sagacity evinced in the transaction.

20. *But for Adam there was not found an help meet.* The particle 'but' here stands adversative to an idea that is implied but not expressed, viz. that all the males of the brute creation were supplied with mates, *but* for man no such provision had yet been made, as among all the animals none was found suitable for him.—'All that he saw were fit to be his servants, none his companions. The same God that finds the want supplies it. Rather than man's innocency shall want an outward comfort, God will begin a new creation; not out of the earth, which was the matter of man; not out of the inferior creatures which were the servants of man; but of himself, for dearness, for equality. Doubtless such was man's power of obedience, that if God had bidden him yield up his rib, waking, for his use, he had done it cheerfully; but the bounty of God was so absolute, that he would not so much as consult with man's will to make him happy. As man knew not while he was made, so shall he not know while his other self is made out of him; that the comfort might be greater, which was seen before it was expected.' *Bp. Hall.*

21. *Caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.* As this deep sleep is said to have been caused in a supernatural way, the Sept. version is probably correct in rendering it *extacy* or *trance*, such as usually fell upon the prophets and

and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof:

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and <sup>h</sup> brought her unto the man.

h Prov. 18. 22. Hebr. 13. 4.

others when favoured with visions and revelations from God. Nor do we see any objection to Lightfoot's supposition, that such was the nature of Adam's sleep at this time, that the whole scene of Eve's creation was presented to his imagination in a divinely inspired dream: for it is evident from v. 23, that Adam was fully apprized of the circumstances of her origination.—¶ *Took one of his ribs, &c.* Whether there was some peculiar organization in Adam in order to provide for the production of the woman, or God substituted another rib for the one taken away, we need not inquire. The account of the woman's formation has indeed been made the subject of the frequent profane cavils of the enemies of revelation; but there is surely nothing in the narrative calculated to weaken its credibility, or to reflect upon the wisdom of the Almighty Architect. The miracle is in the creation, not in the choice of subjects to create from. That omnipotence which bids the embryo grow up into the full proportion and stature of a man, can with equal ease expand the smallest atom of nature into the perfect symmetry of the human frame. That there was moreover an important mystical meaning intended to be conveyed by this mode of formation sufficient to vindicate it from all reproach, will appear from a subsequent note, see on v. 23.

22. *Made him a woman.* Heb. *בניו לה* *built her to a woman*; whence our bodies are called 'houses,' Job, 4. 19. 2 Cor. 5. 1.—¶ *And*

23 And Adam said, *This is now* <sup>1</sup> bone of my bones, and flesh

<sup>1</sup> ch. 29. 14. Judg. 9. 2. 2 Sam. 5. 1. & 19. 13. Ephes. 5. 30.

brought her unto the man. Heb. **וַיִּבְרָא** led, conducted, that is, presented her to the man. Compare the Latin phrase *ducere uxorem, to lead, i. e. to marry, a wife*. It can scarcely be supposed that she was, after her formation, taken to a distance from Adam and then reconducted into his presence. It is far more rational to understand the term of simply presenting her to him on the spot where she was created, which was doubtless the same where Adam was reposing at the time. The word implies, moreover, the formal solemn bestowment of her in the bonds of the marriage covenant, which is hence called 'the covenant of God,' Prov. 2. 17, implying that he is the author of this sacred institution.

23. *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.* Heb. **וַיִּבְרָא זֶה עַתָּה**, *this is for this time, this once*, implying that it was only on this occasion that woman was to come into being in this manner; thereafter the ordinary mode of her production should be different. The phrase, 'bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,' points not only to the woman's origin, but also to the nearness of the marriage relation, to the partnership and love, that was henceforth to subsist between them. Their being both as it were of one flesh shows that the nuptial state was designed to be one of the utmost mutual tenderness and endearment, and the foundation of affection being thus laid in their identity of nature, strongly evinces the indissoluble bond of that union. The language of Paul moreover, Eph. 5. 28, 32, shows that the creation and marriage of our first parents were intended to be typical of the union between Christ and the church; — 'So ought men to love their wives

of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was <sup>k</sup> taken out of man.

k 1 Cor. 11.

as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and his church.' On which passage Macknight remarks that 'Adam, in whom the human race began, was a natural image of Christ, in whom the human race was to be restored; and his deep sleep, the opening of his side, and the formation of Eve of a rib taken out of his side, were fit emblems of Christ's death, of the opening of his side on the cross, and of the regeneration of believers by his death. The love which Adam expressed towards Eve, and his union with her in marriage, were lively images of Christ's love to believers, and of his eternal union with them in one society after their resurrection. Thus the circumstances which accompanied the formation of Eve, being fit emblems of the formation of the church, we may suppose that they were brought to pass to prefigure that great event; and by prefiguring it, to show that it was decreed of God, from the very beginning.' *Com. in loc.* Thus many valuable purposes were answered by the creation of Eve from a rib taken from the side of man; and this consideration should fortify our belief of the fact as recorded against the scorn and sarcasms of infidel objectors. — ¶ *She shall be called woman.* That is, being partaker of my nature she shall be in effect called by my name; for

24 <sup>1</sup> Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

1 ch. 31. 15. Ps. 45. 10. Matt. 19. 5. Mark 10. 7. 1 Cor. 6. 16. Eph. 5. 31.

the original word for 'woman' is *Isha* (אִשָּׁה), the feminine of *Ish* (אִישׁ) *man*, and properly signifies, however uncouth the sound to our ears, *man-ness*. So in the old Latin *vir*, a *man*, *vir*, a *woman*, whence *virago*, contracted *virgo*, a *virgin*. The English word *woman*, however, will appear a more appropriate rendering if its Anglo-Saxon origin *womb-man*, i. e. female man, be borne in mind. It may be remarked also that the word 'called' both here and often elsewhere in the Scriptures is properly significant of *nature*, as well as of *title*. See note on Gen. 32. 28.

24. *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, &c.* Whether this is to be considered as an inspired comment of Moses on the language of the preceding verse, or as the words of Adam himself in continuation, it is difficult to determine. If they be supposed to have been uttered by Adam, as he could as yet have had no idea of a father, mother, child, or the relations and affections subsisting between them, 'hey must have been prompted by immediate inspiration. But to whichever of them the words are to be ascribed, they are by our Saviour, Mat. 19. 4—6, evidently referred to as an authoritative expression of the divine will in regard to the institution of marriage. It is an explicit declaration that this endearing union was to be of a more intimate and sacred nature than any other; that every other was to yield to it, and be, as it were, swallowed up in it; that the parties were to deem themselves as entirely and indissolubly united, as if they were in reality one person, one soul, one body; and what can convey a more impressive idea of the

25 <sup>m</sup> And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not <sup>n</sup> ashamed.

m ch. 3, 7, 10, 11. n Exod. 32. 25. Isa. 47. 3.

binding nature of this holy covenant, than such a declaration? Indeed one cannot easily be guilty of a greater outrage against a solemn ordinance of heaven, or inflict a deeper wound upon the best interests of society, than to treat the marriage tie as any other than *an indissoluble union between one man and one woman*. Although it be true that God did for wise reasons and in a less enlightened age *tolerate* for a season the practice both of polygamy and divorce, yet it is unquestionable that both are contrary to the original design of the institution, and cannot take place without sin on one side or the other. As for polygamy, it is clearly forbidden by the fact that but a single pair only were created, and by the terms of the command, that a man shall cleave to his *wife* (not *wives*) *only*. And as to divorce, although it is authorized for one reason and but one, yet even in that case it is by no means certain that the *essential obligation* of the union, the real *vinculum matrimonii*, ever can be truly dissolved, notwithstanding a separation of the parties may take place. In the sight of God the *sinning* husband or the *sinning* wife is still held by the moral bonds of the original compact, though the *innocent* party may be at liberty to marry again.

25. *And were not ashamed.* They had no consciousness of any thing that ought to occasion shame or cause a blush. Shame is a fruit of sin. But in the primeval state, such sensations were unknown, and the guileless feelings of infancy reigned in the bosom of innocence. 'Clothes are the ensigns of our sin and covers of our shame. To



## CHAPTER III.

**N**OW <sup>a</sup> the serpent was <sup>b</sup> more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had

a Rev. 12. 9. & 20. 2. b Matt. 10. 16. 2 Cor. 11. 3.

be proud of them is as great a folly as for a beggar to be proud of his rags or a thief of his halter. As the prisoner looking on his irons thinketh on his theft, so we looking on our garments, should think on our sins.'—Trapp.

## CHAPTER III.

The happiness of our first parents in Paradise must have far exceeded any thing which we can now imagine. Formed in the image of God, with all their faculties perfect and their appetites in subjection, undisturbed by care, and as yet unassailed by temptation, they walked with God as a man walketh with his friend, and enjoyed communion with heaven, though their abode was upon earth. There was no cloud upon their understanding, no undue bias on their will, nothing inordinate in their affections. As to external comforts, they were surrounded by every thing that could minister to their innocent delight, and in the keen relish of their new-created existence, their pure hearts expanded with emotions of love, adoration, gratitude, and joy, towards their bountiful Creator. But this happiness, alas! was of short duration! In the present chapter a sad reverse comes over the beatific scene which we have hitherto contemplated. We are reluctantly brought forward to that awful revolution which took place in their condition. Henceforth we behold them fallen, sinful, degraded, wretched, ruined! Their history now becomes blended with that of the wicked and malignant spirit, who had 'left his first estate' of holiness and bliss, and who, by his fiendish arts, having seduced the happy pair from their innocence, exposed them to the wrath of God, procur-

made: and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

ed their expulsion from Paradise, and overwhelmed them with all the unutterable miseries of the fall.

1. *The serpent.* Heb. נָחַשׁ *nahash*. The word 'serpent' in our language comes from the Latin *serpo*, to creep, but the Hebrew term has no relation to the form or motion or any external attribute of the serpent. It is a term descriptive solely of *mental* properties, being derived from a root signifying to search or scrutinize closely, to find out by experiment, and in some few instances to practise divination or augury. Gen. 44. 5. Lev. 19. 26. 1 Kings, 20. 33. The name therefore is obviously more appropriate, in its original import, to some kind of rational being, than to a brute beast or an unintelligent reptile. And this brings us to the consideration of the question respecting the real agent or agents to whom the too successful temptation of our first parents was owing. This has been a point of great controversy in all ages, and in the efforts of learned ingenuity and perverted criticism to reduce this part of the sacred history to allegory or fable, even the presence of a real natural serpent has been denied, and the whole treated as a mere figurative or symbolical representation designed to convey under expressive emblems certain great moral truths, which it was important for man to know. But as to this alternative of resolving the present record into an allegory, it creates as many difficulties as it removes. For as Horsley well remarks, 'The narrative of this chapter must be either all plain matter of fact, or all allegory. It cannot be matter of fact in one part, and allegory in another. For no writer of true history would mix plain matter of fact with allegory

in one continued narrative, without any intimation of a transition from the one to the other. If therefore any part of this narrative be matter of fact, no part of it is allegorical. On the other hand, if any part be allegorical, no part is naked matter of fact; and the consequence of this will be, that every thing in every part of the whole narrative must be allegorical. If the formation of the woman out of man be allegory, the woman must be an allegorical woman. The man must therefore be an allegorical man; for of such a man only the allegorical woman will be a meet companion. If the man be allegorical, his Paradise is an allegorical garden; the trees that grew in it, allegorical trees; the rivers that watered it, allegorical rivers; and thus we may ascend to the very beginning of the creation, and conclude at last that the heavens are allegorical heavens, and the earth an allegorical earth. Thus the whole history of the creation will be an allegory, of which the real subject is not disclosed, and in this absurdity the whole scheme of allegorizing ends.' *Biblical Criticism*, vol. I. pp. 9, 10. We may therefore safely rest in the literal interpretation of the narrative, and assert the presence and the agency of a true material serpent. That the act attributed to him of uttering articulate sounds, was indeed pre-eminently wonderful and miraculous, no one will hesitate to admit. But a similar circumstance is unequivocally asserted of Balaam's ass, Num. 22. 28, and the truth of the miracle cannot be questioned, as it is confirmed by apostolic authority, 2 Pet. 2. 16. It is there said indeed that 'the Lord opened the mouth of the ass,' whereas in the present narrative it is not said by what agency utterance was given to the serpent; but the possibility is equal in both cases and a due reverence for Scripture, would seem to force from us the admission that here was a real serpent utter-

ing real words, since the inspired historian expressly asserts the fact. But was this all? Is there not clear evidence of the presence also of a higher power latent under the serpentine form and acting through it as an obsequious organ? Moses, it is true, makes no express mention of any such agent, but there are plainly some things ascribed by the history to the serpent, which do not agree with the properties of a mere brute creature. The serpent has not only the faculty of speech, but he reasons upon matters relating to God and man; he speaks of good and evil as if possessed of a thorough knowledge of the laws of nature and providence; he argues against the divine prohibition; steals upon the woman with the most alluring artifice, and finally persuades her to disobey the injunction. No mere animal, it is evident could be capable of itself of what is here attributed to the serpent, which must consequently have been impelled by some superior intelligent agent who used that creature as the passive instruments of his malignity. Such being the case, no doubt can remain as to this agent, for no being, except the apostate spirit, could either plan or execute the malevolent design of supplanting primeval innocence, and destroying the happiness of paradise. This conclusion is confirmed by the nature of the sentence which the Lord God, ver. 14, pronounces upon the serpent, 'Because thou hast done this thou art cursed,' &c. Here the sentence is plainly directed against an intelligent being and free agent, who had been guilty of committing a crime of enormous character. It were ridiculous to suppose the Almighty in so solemn a manner addressing only a brute animal incapable of moral guilt. Intimations, moreover, to the same effect are found in other parts of the sacred volume. Thus our Saviour, John, 8. 44, tells the Jews that 'they were of their father the dev-

il,' and that 'he was a murderer from the beginning,' where he probably alludes to his destructive agency in the transaction here recorded, as well as to that which he exercised in instigating Cain to the murder of Abel. For if he was 'a murderer from the beginning,' he must have been so from the earliest period in which he could have been guilty of this crime; and he could not justly be styled 'the father of lies,' if he were not the first from whom a lie ever proceeded. But he plainly acted in both these characters at the period referred to, and to this our Lord undoubtedly alludes. Again, the Apostle Paul in exhorting the Corinthians to beware of false teachers, says, 'I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.' Here is a comparison between the seduction of the Corinthians, and the seduction of Eve; and as the former were in no danger of being deceived by a mere brute animal, Eve cannot be supposed to have been beguiled by a more irrational creature. If the serpent in Genesis were nothing more than the brute reptile, the comparison is destroyed, but if it were the organ of Satan, the comparison is true and forcible; that is, there was danger lest Satan should deceive the Corinthian converts through the means of false teachers, as he did Eve by means of the serpent. That such is the apostle's meaning is implied in vs. 13—15, of the same chapter; 'For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.' We know from Scripture of no other period in the history of this arch-apostate when the transformation here predicated of him is so likely to have taken place as that now referred to when he perhaps assumed the form of a bright, glorious, and winged serpent, of that

kind which in Scripture are called *seraphs* or *seraphim*, from their *luminous, burning, glowing* appearance, an appearance that might very naturally have suggested the phrase, 'angel of light.' There can be no reasonable doubt, therefore, that the devil actuated the serpent by which Eve was beguiled, and that he was consequently the instigator of the first sin in Paradise. This being is here designated under the appellation *serpent* from his *insidious, subtle, and malignant* nature, and the epithet *old* is applied to him Rev. 12. 9, from his having commenced his diabolical acts at the creation, and continued to practise them through several thousand years down to the period of that prophecy. He is moreover elsewhere called *Devil* from his being a *calumniator*, or *slanderer*; *Satan* from his being an *adversary* or *hater*; and the *Wicked One* from his general character. —¶ *Was more subtle than any beast of the field.* Heb. ערום. That is, more cunning, wily, insidious. The term in its primary import signifies *naked*, but like many other Hebrew words originally expressive of *physical* properties, it came gradually to be applied to certain *mental* acts or attributes of a somewhat analogous nature. Whatever is naked is more free from impediments, and can therefore act in a more unembarrassed, easy, flexible, and effective manner than that which is hindered and harassed by any kind of covering. The transfer of the term, therefore, from corporeal to intellectual operations, as equivalent to *expert, adroit, possessing quickness of mind, discernment, sagacity*, either in a good or bad sense, is at once natural and accordant with the metaphorical usages of most ancient tongues. Thus, Heb. 5. 14. 'Who by reason of use have their senses *exercised* (Gr. γυμνασμένα *make naked*) to discern both good and evil.' It is consequently in numerous instances the term in the original which

the Greek translators have represented by the epithet *φρονιμος* *wise*, and in the present passage that version exhibits *φρονιμοτατος* *most wise*, in allusion to which our Saviour says to his disciples, Mat. 10. 16, 'Be ye *wise* (*φρονιμοι*) as serpents and harmless as doves.' In other cases it is translated by *πανουργος* *cunning, crafty*, and in our English version is very often rendered by the epithet *prudent*, as Prov. 12. 16, 'A *prudent man* (ערם) covereth shame.' Pro. 14. 8, 'The wisdom of the *prudent* (ערם) is to understand his way?' The verbal root occurs in the sense of *acting with serpentine subtilty* in 1 Sam. 23. 22, where in reference to David's hiding himself in lurking places and thence making sudden sallies on his enemies, it is said, 'It is told me that he *dealeth very subtilty* (ערם יערם).'  
In the present case commentators are not unanimous in explaining the application of the epithet. Some think that it refers both to the animal and the devil who actuated it; others, that the serpent is called 'subtle' solely by reason of the subtilty of the devil, who used it as his instrument, as the tongue is said to be wise or crafty when moved by a person possessed of these qualities. The former of these opinions strikes us as the more probable of the two. The attribute described pertained, we think, both to the primary and the secondary agent here employed. At the same time, we do not hesitate to admit that the dominant and more especial reference is to the *spiritual* rather than the *natural* serpent; for of him insidious cunning and malignant subtilty may be preeminently predicated. We may remark also that as far as the epithet applies to the material serpent, it is not properly characteristic of the reptile tribe as at present known to us, as this is neither the most sagacious, nor the most cunning and subtle of the brute creation. Except in the mere instinct of lurking insidiously to attack

its unwary victim, and of aiming to secure its head when assaulted, it is not peculiarly distinguished by superior astuteness. But its shape and properties may not have been originally the same as they now are. It is not unlikely that a debasing and deteriorating change has taken place in consequence of the curse pronounced upon it. It is here classed among 'the beasts of the field;' but if it had then been a vile reptile as it now is, it would have been more naturally ranked among 'the creeping things,' as the distinction is somewhat closely observed in the first chapter of Genesis; and the denunciation, 'Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life,' would seem moreover to import some great and remarkable punishment, such at least as his being reduced to a more abject condition than that in which he was created. Accordingly we find a general belief both among the ancient Jews and the early Christians that the serpent before the fall was not only gentle and innocuous, but in form and appearance among the most beautiful of creatures. In Num. 21. 6, it is said that 'The Lord sent *fiery serpents* among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.' Here the original phrase is נחשים חרופים *seraphim* or *burning serpents*, probably from their resplendent colour, in which they resembled an order of angelic beings called also *seraphs* or *seraphim*. Isaiah also ch. 14. 29, speaks of a 'flying fiery serpent,' doubtless of a similar species. We know therefore of no insuperable objection to considering the serpent of Eden as a far more splendid and beautiful creature than the common reptile so denominated; and the traditionary comment of Rabbi Bechai may perhaps rest upon solid grounds. 'This is the secret (or mystery) of the holy language, that a serpent is called שרף *saraph* as an angel is called שרף *saraph*;' and then after

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 'But of the fruit of the tree

c cb. 2. 17.

quoting Num. 21. 6, he adds, 'The Scripture calls serpents שרפים *seraphim* because they were תלדות הנחש *the offspring of the old serpent*. Understand this as a matter of great concernment.' 'Which can have no meaning, I think, but this; that the devil, whom St. John calls Rev. 12. 9, 'the old serpent,' in this serpent here spoken of counterfeited a glorious *seraphim*, and thereby seduced Eve to give credit to him.' Patrick. If this then were the primitive form and aspect of the serpent, he may have possessed a proportionate degree of intelligence, and sagacity, and a part of his sentence may have consisted in his being degraded in the scale of creation, not only in outward form, but in the inward properties here spoken of. But of this sentence we shall have more to say in a subsequent note.—¶ *Said unto the woman*. Knowing doubtless that she was the weaker of the two, and less capable of sustaining an assault; and taking advantage, moreover, of an opportunity when she was alone, bereft of the counsel and succour of her husband, and consequently still less prepared to withstand the temptation.—

¶ *Yea hath God said?* Heb. אף כי אמר אלהים *is it surely so that God hath said?* As the particle 'yea' in English is generally used as an addition to something going before, so the corresponding Hebrew phrase is one that seldom occurs at the beginning of a sentence. The probability therefore is that this was not the commencement of his discourse, but that something which the historian does not relate had been previously said.—¶ *Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden*. The drift

which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

of the tempter evidently was, by artful insinuations, to weaken the authority of God's word. 'What, is it credible, is it possible, that a Being so good, so bountiful, so mindful of the happiness of his creatures, should have laid such an arbitrary command upon you?—that he should have grudged you the enjoyment of any part of the ample provision he has made for your use and comfort?—Surely you must have mistaken his meaning?' Thus corrupt nature always reasons when it craves a forbidden indulgence. It secretly impeaches the *reasonableness* of the divine precepts, and finally comes to deny both their *truth* and their *existence*.

2. *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden*. The first assault of the insidious tempter is well sustained by the woman, though she would probably have acted a still wiser part by flying at once and holding no parley whatever with one who had thus assailed her instinctive sense of right. It will be observed that his question, from its ambiguous phraseology, was very artfully framed. Without noticing the free grant of all the trees but one, he slyly insinuates that they had been forbidden the use of *every* tree without exception. 'But no,' says the woman, 'you misinterpret the tenor of the command. It is not a prohibition of *every* tree. On the contrary the Creator has kindly allowed us the use of all the trees, with one single exception. We may not eat of the tree in the midst of the garden.'

3. *God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it*. The phrase, 'neither shall ye touch it,' does not occur in the terms of the original prohibition, and some have supposed that the



4 <sup>d</sup> And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know, that in

d ver. 13. 2 Cor. 11. 3. 1 Tim. 2. 14.

poison had even now begun to work in the mind of Eve, and that this was added as a tacit insinuation of the harshness of the command. But as in our view her innocence was yet incorrupt, we cannot well imagine that she should knowingly have added to God's word, and therefore we deem it more likely, that she sincerely understood the prohibition of *touching* to be involved in that of *eating*, as the former would naturally be the *occasion* of the latter, and so was carefully to be avoided. And this exposition of the woman while upright affords a good rule to us. If we would shun evil, we must shun the appearance of it, the occasions of it, every avenue that leads to it. To parley with temptation is to play with our ruin. In all this Eve sinned not nor charged God foolishly; and by thus reciting the command in all its entirety, she not only vindicated it from the falsification and distortion of Satan, who would have represented it as capricious and tyrannical, but showed that she regarded it as altogether kind and equitable, and such as ought to be implicitly obeyed; first, because God had liberally given them the freedom of all the trees of the garden with one exception; and secondly, because he had enforced the command by the terrible threatening of death in case of disobedience. — ¶ *Lest ye die.* Heb. כִּן תָּמוּתוּן. These words, it has been supposed, indicate a secret working of the power of temptation; inasmuch as they show a disposition on Eve's part to soften the terms in which the prohibition had been given. While God had said, 'Thou shalt surely die,' she in repeating it said, 'lest ye die;' thus converting a most positive threatening of instant and certain death

the day ye eat thereof, then \* your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

e ver. 7. Acts 26. 18.

into a gentle caution against a possible or probable misfortune, 'Touch not *for fear* ye die.' But this construction can scarcely be sustained upon philological grounds. The Heb. כִּן *pen* frequently occurs in connections where it implies no doubt, as Ps. 2. 12, 'Kiss the son, lest (כִּן) he be angry, and ye perish from the way,' &c. Where there are so many *real* grounds for condemning Eve's conduct, it is our duty to be cautious in giving those which are merely *problematical*.

4. *Ye shall not surely die.* Heb. 'ye shall not dying die.' Gr. 'ye shall not die the death.' Improving the advantage he had already gained in securing Eve's ear to his suggestions, he proceeds to question in direct terms the grounds of her fears as to the penalty threatened. 'It is not so certain as you imagine that such a direful consequence will follow. True, indeed, God has said it, but you cannot suppose he was really in earnest. He made use of this language merely as an expedient to keep you in awe, or he had some mystical meaning in the words different from that conveyed by the simple letters. Do not then give way to such unworthy thoughts of an infinitely kind and gracious Being. Do not suppose that for so trivial an offence as eating a little fruit he will doom you to perdition, and thus suddenly destroy the most excellent work of his hands.' Thus the enemy proceeded to impugn the divine veracity, charging God with nothing short of a lie. And such is usually the method adopted by his artful emissaries. They begin by suggesting doubts, often in the form of specious interrogatories, and end in positive assertions, denying, ridiculing, or openly

6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to

make *one* wise; she took of the fruit thereof, 'and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, 'and he did eat.

f 1 Tim. 2. 14. g ver. 12. 17.

blaspheming the divine declarations. In allusion to the policy of Satan on this occasion, our Saviour says, John, 8. 44, 'When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.' Accordingly here, as far as we know, is his first-begotten lie.

5. *Your eyes shall be opened.* Finding that Eve did not revolt at his impious assertions, he rises in his effrontery and assumes a tone of direct and open blasphemy. Knowing that to an intelligent and holy being nothing was so desirable as knowledge, he boldly affirms that there was in the fruit of the tree a virtue capable of wonderfully enlarging her views, so that she and her husband should 'become as gods,' and possess a self-sufficiency and independence suited to that high character. Not only so, he appeals to God himself, as knowing that this would be the case, and blasphemously insinuates that in withholding the fruit from them he had been actuated by nothing but envy, and a mean jealousy, lest they should become as wise and happy as himself. In all this there was at the same time an artful ambiguity of phrase wonderfully calculated to impose upon unsuspecting innocence. His language is so constructed that while he *meant* one thing, she would naturally *understand* another. By 'opening the eyes,' she understood a farther and higher degree of wisdom, as the phrase imports, Acts, 26. 18. Eph. 1. 18, but he meant it of their perceiving their own misery and feeling remorse of conscience. By 'being as gods' (Elohim), she probably understood the being elevated almost to an equality with the Deity himself in point of knowledge and dignity; but he probably meant it of their being

brought to the condition of the angels that fell, as angels are sometimes styled *Elohim*, Ps. 8. 6. By 'knowing good and evil' she doubtless understood a kind of divine omniscience, whereas his meaning was that they should have a *woful experience* of the difference between good and evil, or between happiness and misery, such as he himself had. The same equivocal character distinguished the responses of the ancient oracles, which were probably the special engines of Satan; and wicked deceivers in all ages have employed the same diabolical subtlety in the use of double senses to compass their ends, concealing the essence of a lie under the semblance of the truth.

6. *When the woman saw.* That is, by a close and prying observation, by gazing upon it with a longing eye, by imagining to herself the gratification it would afford. Thus Achan *saw* and *coveted* and *took*. Josh. 7. 21.—¶ *Pleasant to the eye.* Heb. 'a desire, a lust,' i. e. something exceedingly to be longed for. The lust had now conceived which, as the apostle say, 'bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.' James, 1. 15.—¶ *To make one wise.* That is, if the word of the serpent were to be believed. This was all the evidence she had that the tree was possessed of this property. As to its other inviting qualities, she could be satisfied of them, in a measure, by the testimony of her senses, but as to its ability to make one wise, this she was necessarily obliged to take upon trust.—¶ *She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.* Yielding to the sophistry of the serpent, and overpowered

by the alluring aspect of the fruit, and the hope of attaining superior knowledge, the too frail mother of the human race put forth her hand in evil hour to the interdicted tree, and thus wrought her ruin! Not only so, 'she gave also unto her husband with her,' i. e. *that he might eat with her*; that he might participate with her in the act and its consequences; and Adam with fatal facility complied; thus consummating the sin which 'brought death into the world and all our woes.' In regard to both it was their own free and unconstrained act; for however Satan may incite, he cannot compel. They could lay the blame of their disobedience upon no one but themselves, and looking <sup>into</sup> themselves, they could find no apoc. <sup>ry</sup> for their crime. By one rash act committed against an express command, and under circumstances of the highest enormity, they lifted the flood-gate which has poured in a deluge of miseries upon the world. Besides the loss to themselves of the image and favour of God, remorse of conscience, expulsion from Eden, the curse of toil, sorrow, and sickness, and the sentence of death to body and soul; all the sins, sufferings, crimes, and woes which have afflicted the earth in its countless millions of inhabitants from that day to this, are to be traced to that transgression as their fountain-head. The limited grasp of the mind of man is not adequate to take in the length and breadth and fearful extent of the evil which has thus been entailed upon the human family—an evil running parallel with the present life and reaching forward into an unmeasured eternity!—An event so awfully disastrous in its immediate and its remoter consequences, especially when viewed in connection with the divine attributes, naturally gives rise to many anxious inquiries which we may find it difficult to answer. We are prone to ask why, in the full foresight of such a result, God should have permitted man to be thus

tempted, thus overcome, and thus involved in sin, misery, and death, when he could easily have prevented it? But the true question is, whether he could have prevented it without doing violence to the nature of man as a free agent, and consistently with the great ends which he had proposed to himself in his creation. By his very constitution he was endowed with free will, and therefore liable to temptation and transgression; and infinite wisdom foresaw that it would be productive of more ultimate good that man should be made a free moral being, though he might abuse his freedom, than that he should be made otherwise. He therefore created him, as Milton happily expresses it:—

Sufficient to have stood, but free to fall.

And having placed him in a state of probation, surrounded by motives of which some induced to obedience and some to disobedience, but with perfect liberty of choice, an easy duty was enjoined, and the penalty of transgression laid before him. He had abundant power and abilities to enable him to stand the test. He was under no compulsion to disobey. His Maker had set life and death before him, and left it to his own unforced volition which to choose. Had omnipotence interposed in these circumstances and exercised a supernatural influence upon his freedom of will to prevent his sin, he had thereby destroyed the foundation of all the merit of obedience, and put it out of his power to make any trial of him at all. It would have been to govern him not as a *free*, but as a *necessary* agent, and any reward for his conduct would in that case have been as absurd as to reward the sun for shining, or the rivers for running into the ocean. Man therefore fell not by any inevitable necessity, but by the abuse of his free agency, and to say that God did not interpose to prevent it, is merely to say that he did not see fit to do violence to the moral

7 And <sup>h</sup> the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew

<sup>h</sup> ver. 5. 1 ch. 2. 25.

nature of the being he formed, but left it to be influenced according to the laws to which he had made it subject. And this he did because he saw, that in its bearings on the vast scheme of his government, this course would tend finally to produce a far greater degree of glory to himself and of happiness to his creatures than any other. And even with our present imperfect vision, aided by the light of Christianity, we are able to discover some signal benefits arising from that catastrophe which to a superficial view might appear fraught only with fatal and unhappy consequences. For had not Adam fallen, Christ would not have redeemed mankind. Had there been no sinners, there could have been no Redeemer, and no redemption. The mercy of God, the most engaging of all his attributes, and the consummation of all his excellence, would have been unknown to the universe. All the blessings bestowed on mankind would have been the reward of the obedience of Adam and his posterity. But the blessings bestowed on glorified saints are rewards of the obedience of the Son of God. These rewards could not have been given, had not Christ obeyed; and Christ could not have obeyed had he not become the substitute for sinners and the Mediator between God and apostate creatures. We may see therefore that the glory of the divine perfections is more advantageously displayed by the grand scheme of human redemption than it could have been by the uninterrupted innocence of the first man. We are moreover, capable in this way of attaining higher happiness than if our first parents had continued in their integrity. The terrestrial Paradise presents only a faint image of the celestial Paradise of God; and it is most agreeable to infinite mer-

cy to suppose, that the loss of the happiness of the one will be followed by the acquisition of still greater felicity in the other. Had not man fallen, none of that joy would have been experienced which now springs up in heavenly minds over the repentance and salvation of sinners, which will increase and deepen for ever. 'By the redemption of Christ, heaven as well as earth, angels as well as men, are materially changed from their former circumstances and character. Nay, the whole immense and eternal kingdom of Jehovah, by means of this amazing work, assumes a new aspect; and both creation and providence are invested with a new character. God is seen by his intelligent creatures in new manifestations of beauty, glory, and loveliness. Throughout never-ending ages, virtuous minds will be enlarged with knowledge, exalted in holiness, and improved in dignity and happiness beyond all which would otherwise have been proper or possible; and their affections, obedience, and praise become more refined and more elevated, in a rapid and regular progress.' *Dwight*. Such are the consolatory views of the present, and the enlivening hopes of the future, which we are taught in the sacred writings to draw from the primeval transgression. What God saw not fit to prevent, he has been pleased to repair, and the baneful consequences of that sad event are remedied by a dispensation of such transcendent wisdom and mercy as will be a theme of admiration and praise to adoring millions for ever. Truly 'where sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded.'

7. And the eyes of them both were opened. That is, the eyes of their minds. They had the mental perception of their guilt and misery. They



8 And they heard <sup>k</sup> the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day :

<sup>k</sup> Job 38. 1.

had a sense, a discovery, of the consequences of their sin which they never had nor could have before. A similar effect always follows the commission of known sin. A terrible light is let in on the soul to which, during the process of the temptation, it was a comparative stranger. It is in fact the *experimental* knowledge of the difference between good and evil. The result in the case of our first parents was, that they saw themselves *naked*; by which is meant, not so much that they were sensible that their bodies were destitute of clothing, for of this they were doubtless aware before, but they now recognized their nakedness with shame and confusion, and were at the same time conscious of a sad privation of innocence, which had before covered them as with a robe. They felt themselves *bereaved* of the comfortable presence and favour of their Maker, and thus made *naked* through exposure to his wrath. This view of the meaning of the terms is abundantly confirmed by the parallel usage, Ex. 32. 25. 2 Chron. 23. 19. Rev. 16. 15.—¶ *They sewed fig-leaves together.* Heb. **תפפר**. An unfortunate rendering, as the term *sewed* is too definite and such as gives occasion to infidel cavils, as if Moses represented the use of the implements of sewing as known to Adam and Eve in Paradise. The true meaning is, that they *tied, twisted, platted, or fastened together* the leafy twigs and small branches of the fig-tree, so as to form a sort of girdle, somewhat resembling the laurel wreath worn upon the head among the Romans. The original **תפפר** *taphar* occurs Job, 16. 15, where, although it is rendered, 'I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin;' it can mean

and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

1 Job 31. 33. Jer. 23. 24. Amos 9. 3.

nothing more than *applied, fitted, adjusted*; and so also Ezek. 13. 18, 'Wo to the women that *sew* (**מהתפרות**) pillows to all armholes.' The leaf of the fig-tree is large and broad and well adapted to the purpose.—¶ *Aprons.* Heb. 'things to gird about.' Their sin made them sensible of their nakedness; their nakedness awakened the sense of shame; and the impulse of shame prompted them to the expedient of an artificial covering for their persons.

8. *Heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden.* The newly begotten sense of guilt was now awakened by another circumstance. The phrase 'voice of the Lord God' is usually applied to thunder, of which a striking proof occurs, Job, 37. 4, 5. Ps. 29. 3—9, and it is not improbable that now for the first time a fearful tempest attended with loud peals of thunder was the occasion of their terror. The epithet 'walking' is to be joined, not with 'Lord,' but with 'voice,' as it is in the original the same word with that used to signify the sound of the trumpet upon Mount Sinai, Ex. 19. 19, 'And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long (Heb. walked).' A voice may be said to *walk* or *go* when it increases in intensity waxing louder and louder. The same term is applied to any thing which is capable of increasing in degree, as to a constantly brightening light, Prov. 4. 18, 'The path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more (Heb. walketh) to the perfect day;' and to the sea excited by a storm, Jon. 1. 11, 'For the sea wrought (Heb. walked) and was tempestuous;' i. e. became increasingly tempestuous. See note on Gen. 26. 13.—¶ *In the cool of the day.* Heb.



9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden: <sup>m</sup> and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee

m ch. 2. 25. Exod. 3. 6. 1 John 3. 20.

'in the wind or breeze of the day;' i. e. towards evening when the wind rises in oriental countries. Or with Calvin we may understand it of the morning breeze, called the *wind of the day* in opposition to that of the *evening* or *night*. This however, would seem to be less probable, as it would bring the arraignment and condemnation of the guilty pair to the morning of the first sabbath, which it is reasonable to suppose was not marked by so gloomy an event.—¶ *Hid themselves*. Through the terror inspired by conscious guilt. That presence which they had before welcomed with joy now fills them with dismay. Their consciences set their sin before them in its blackest aspect, and as they had then no hope of a future Mediator, there remained to their apprehension nothing but 'a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation' ready to devour them. The consequence was, that they fled into the most retired and dark recesses of the garden under the vain hope of eluding the all-seeing eye of their Maker. Such is invariably the prompting of a guilty conscience; but where, alas! can the trembling sinner hope to conceal his person or his crime? Trees, rocks, and caverns will be resorted to in vain. His only hope is in falling down at once with a broken heart and in deep repentance at the footstool of sovereign mercy.

9. *Where art thou?* Not as if God were ignorant of Adam's hiding-place, for 'there is no creature that is not man-

that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, <sup>n</sup> The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

n ch. 2. 18. Job 31. 33. Prov. 28. 13.

ifest in his sight,' but his purpose was to awaken in the minds of the culprits a still deeper sense of guilt and thus to bring them to a penitent confession before him. Designing moreover, to proceed against them in a way of unimpeachable equity, he would give them every opportunity to account for their conduct, and say what they could in their defence—a pattern for all ministers of justice. In like manner and for the same reason the Lord afterwards interrogated Cain respecting his brother.

10. *I was afraid because I was naked*. Evidently dissembling the true cause. He had been naked before, but that circumstance had neither occasioned him shame, nor prompted the least disposition to shun the presence of his Maker. He would fain make it believed that he had hid himself from a reverential awe of the divine Majesty. How naturally does crime lead to prevarication!

11. *Who told thee that thou wast naked?* That is, whence didst thou acquire the consciousness of thy nakedness? Whence, but by transgressing the express command laid upon thee? He would extort the confession from his own lips in order to pave the way for the righteous sentence which was to follow.

12. *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, &c.* Adam is here brought to convict himself, yet his confession is not candid and ingenuous, but equivocating and reluctant. 'I did eat,' which should have been his first words, are

13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, ° The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14 And the LORD God said

o ver. 4. 2 Cor. 11. 3. 1 Tim. 2. 14.

placed last, and are preceded by an apology which only aggravated the crime. But his conduct was in perfect accordance with what daily meets us when criminals are detected in the commission of a crime. Not daring wholly to deny his guilt, nor yet willing ingenuously to confess it, he proceeds to cast the blame upon the woman, and thus indirectly upon God, who had formed and bestowed her upon him. Thus 'the foolishness of man perverteth his way, and (yet) his heart fretteth against the Lord.' Prov. 19. 3. So fruitful is the depraved heart in excuses and apologies for its sins! So prone to extenuate what it cannot deny!

13. *Said to the woman.* Taking no notice of the reply of Adam, as being too foolish to deserve it, he turned to the woman to hear what she could offer in her own behalf.—¶ *What is this that thou hast done.* Or Heb. 'why hast thou done this?'—¶ *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* The fact was too palpable and glaring to be denied, but in imitation of Adam, she endeavours to free herself from the blame by casting it upon the serpent. But alas! their poor evasions, like their fig-leaves, were too narrow to cover their sins, too thin to ward off the stroke of justice!

14. *Because thou hast done this thou art cursed, &c.* God interrogated the man and the woman, because he purposed to lead them to repentance, but he puts no question to the serpent, as his guilt could admit of no palliation, nor was there the least mercy in store for him. He had tempted Eve self-moved out of the pure malignity of his

unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and ° dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

p Exod. 21. 29, 32. q Is. 65. 25. Mic. 7. 17.

nature, and nothing but a condign punishment awaited him. *Cursing* with men is equivalent simply to evil speaking or to verbal imprecations; it cannot go beyond words. But God's curse is not merely verbal; it implies the *actual infliction* of the woe denounced. Thus when the fig-tree was *cursed*, Mat. 11. 21, it withered away; when the wicked children were *cursed* in the name of the Lord, 2 Kings, 2. 24, they were torn in pieces of wild beast. So on the other hand of the divine *blessing*. It is the *effectual bestowment* of mercies. The object of the curse in this case was both the natural visible serpent employed as the instrument, and Satan himself by whom he was instigated. It was not the serpent alone, and by itself, that tempted the first pair; it was that animal, as moved and impelled by the devil, which accomplished their ruin. The expressions then appertain to both; 'Because thou, Satan, hast done this, through thy agency, thou art cursed,' &c.; and also, 'Because thou, serpent, hast done this, as the instrument, thou art cursed,' &c. Not that a brute reptile could really be guilty of sin, or a fit subject of punishment, but it is entirely in accordance with the usual method of the divine dispensations to put some token of displeasure upon the instrument of an offence, as well as upon the offender who employs it. Thus the beast who had been lain with by man, Lev. 20, 15, was to be burned to death as well as the man himself; the golden calf made by Aaron was burnt and ground to powder and strewed upon the water, Ex. 32. 20; and even the censers of

Korah and his companions were condemned as no longer fit to be applied to a sacred use. This is done in order to express more forcibly the divine detestation of the act, while at the same time we may freely admit that the main weight of the curse undoubtedly fell upon the principal agent, whose doom is mystically expressed in the terms appropriate to a natural serpent. But notwithstanding the intrinsic weight and pertinency of the considerations above adduced in justification of the sentence upon the natural serpent, many persons are perplexed in the attempt to reconcile it with the divine attributes. They see not the propriety of inflicting a punishment upon a brute serpent for the crime of a rational agent. Certain it is, however, that whatever difficulty exists on this score, it is a difficulty equally affecting the allegorical interpretation, since it is alike improper to represent the Deity acting in contradiction to equity and benevolence in fictitious as in real history. To attribute injustice to God, even in a fable or apologue is a blasphemy of which no moral or pious author can be guilty. But the difficulties arising from this source may perhaps be in some measure removed, and the sentence freed from objection, if due weight be given to the following remarks. (1.) It may be sufficient to rest the vindication of the transaction solely upon the sovereignty of God, who has a right to dispose of all his creatures in whatever manner he pleases. What they have and are proceeds from his creative will; and he is most assuredly free to take away what he has freely given. In withholding from one that which he has bestowed upon another, who will dare to arraign his justice? 'Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?' If the sovereign Creator have reduced any particular species in the scale of being, or in

the same order of beings has distinguished some with peculiar advantages above the rest, who can lay ought to the charge either of his goodness or his equity? There may have been wise and benevolent reasons with which we are unacquainted for such a proceeding; and it is most rational to infer the mercy, justice, and wisdom of all acts that are resolvable into the sovereign pleasure of an infinitely merciful, just, and wise being. (2.) It is not clear to what extent the serpent's sentence is to be regarded as a *real punishment*. To punish is to inflict misery; but we do not find any intimation of pain or torture consequent upon the denunciation. The serpent might be deteriorated as to its properties; it might be lowered in the scale of creation; it might be transformed from a shape and appearance the most beautiful in the eyes of man, into a form the most disgusting; and all this without any diminution of its corporeal pleasures. It will not be pretended that the serpent endured any mental suffering by the change. It had none of the anguish which rends the human heart in the sense of degradation. It had no pangs of conscious disgrace, no anticipation of death; it had the means left of providing its food; it could protect itself from its enemies; and as far as we can perceive, the diminution of its powers brought no diminution of its enjoyments. In what sense then, strictly speaking, was it *punished*? (3.) Important benefits resulted from the sentence pronounced upon the serpent. It evidenced God's righteous hatred and abhorrence of sin; and was an instructive emblem to the fallen pair of the divine punishment with which transgression is inevitably visited, as our Lord's cursing the barren fig-tree was designed to teach his disciples emblematically the destructive consequences of not bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Without this standing monument of the penalty of

sin, they might have flattered themselves that their criminality in tasting the forbidden fruit was not very heinous; and that their present degraded state was owing rather to the natural course of things, than to their own wickedness. Nothing therefore could more effectually convince them of the heinousness of their guilt, and the certainty of the divine vengeance due to it, than the change wrought upon that creature which was no more than the mere instrument of evil. It was easy for them to infer, if the mere instrument of evil be thus dealt with, what will become of the real authors and actors? (4.) The sentence of the serpent and its immediate execution, may have served too as a typical prophecy of the victory to be obtained over sin, death, and Satan, by our blessed Redeemer. As the literal sense does not exclude the mystical, the cursing of the serpent may have been designed as a symbol, a visible pledge, of the malediction to be visited, in the fulness of time, upon the prime instigator. Immediately after the fatal transgression our first parents would become fully sensible of their ruin and degradation. They would feel that they had violated a sacred command, that they had lost their primeval innocence, and had then only the melancholy prospect of future misery. In this situation, trembling with apprehension and conscious of their weakness, how gladly would they accept any intimation of mercy from their offended Creator? Such an intimation was given in the scene transpiring before their eyes. The instantaneous effect of the sentence upon the reptile would be to them a certain pledge that the promise now symbolically made would in the appointed time be fulfilled. Viewed in this light the dread visitation upon the instrument of the temptation, may be amply accounted for in perfect consistency with all the divine attributes.—¶ *Upon thy belly*

*shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat.* But another phrase for the extremest subjection and degradation. To what extent this sentence involved the doom of a change in the external form and motion of the serpent, it is not possible confidently to affirm. If the suggestions thrown out in a preceding note respecting the primitive shape and appearance of the creature here employed be well founded, there was doubtless a signal transformation made to pass upon him in consequence of the curse now inflicted. From having formerly moved by the aid of wings, or with the head and breast elevated above the ground, he was now reduced from this imposing posture, and become in the fullest sense of the term, a reptile, vile and loathsome, and incapable of eating any food but what should be more or less mingled with the dust. Still we cannot strenuously insist on this interpretation. The curse *might* have taken effect without any external change of shape or aspect, just as the woman's pain in parturition, though natural to her from the beginning, was made a curse by being greatly increased in intensity. The essence of the sentence was the *degradation* denounced, and in this sense, it was equally applicable to the natural and the spiritual serpent. Satan was to be cast down from heaven to earth and overwhelmed with everlasting disgrace. Rev. 12. 9. It has indeed been a matter of doubt how far the sentence, 'dust shalt thou eat,' holds literally true of the common serpent, or whether it is peculiar to him. But the meaning probably is, that the serpent, in consequence of his creeping on the ground, should of necessity swallow dust with food. Such must, in the nature of things, be the case. That other creatures take dust into the stomach in some measure may be true; but, if it be, it shows no inappropriateness in this particular of the sentence. It is not said that the serpent should

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her

seed: 'it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel.

r Matt. 3. 7. & 13. 38. & 23. 33. John 8. 44. Acts 13. 10. 1 John 3. 8. s Ps. 132. 11. Is. 7. 14. Mic. 5. 3. Matt. 1. 23, 25. Luke 1. 31, 34, 35. Gal. 4. 4.

t Rom. 16. 20. Col. 2. 15. Hebr. 2. 14. 1 John 5. 5. Rev. 12. 7, 17.

eat dust *alone of*, or *more than*, other creatures; but that it should *eat dust*, which is certainly the fact. But the phrase has a tropical import. 'Eating the dust' is but another term for grovelling in the dust, and this is equivalent to being reduced to a condition of meanness, shame, and contempt. Thus the prophet Micah speaking of the nations being confounded, says ch. 7. 17, 'They shall lick the dust like a serpent,' i. e. they shall be utterly overthrown and made vile, debased, and contemptible.

15. *And I will put enmity, &c.* The double sense or twofold application of the terms of the serpent's curse, the one having reference to the instrument, the other to the agent, is to be recognised here also. Nothing is more notorious than the fixed and inveterate antipathy which naturally subsists between man and the whole serpent tribe. A hatred of serpents is apparently inherent and instinctive in every human breast, and may be considered, as perhaps it was designed, as a shadow of that deeper and more irreconcilable hatred which was henceforth to exist between the seed of the woman and their great enemy, the devil, the old serpent. It could be no present consolation, nor ground of future hope to Adam, to learn that serpents should sometimes bite the heels of his posterity, while they in return, should sometimes trample these disgusting creatures to death. Nor in this can we discover any particular connection or correspondence with the offence; for so dire an apostacy would certainly be visited with some greater vengeance than the antipathy

between men and snakes. Such a punishment would be utterly disproportioned to the crime; and it would be signally unworthy the divine majesty to array itself in all the terrors of avenging wrath in order to declare so unimportant a fact. Some further and higher meaning then it must have been intended to convey, and what else could that be than a symbolical prediction of Satan's continued hostility to man, and of the final subjugation of his empire in the world by the Redeemer, here pointed out as 'the seed of the woman.' It is clear, however, beyond all contradiction that the sentence does, in the first instance, apply to the natural serpent.—¶ *Between thy seed and her seed.* That is between thy posterity and her posterity, as *seed* is often used for *children*. By the seed of the serpent is to be understood all wicked men who are called *serpents*, *generation of vipers*, *children of their father the devil*; and as the seed of the woman is set in opposition to these, it must necessarily follow, since Eve is the *natural* mother both of good men and bad men, that it denotes a *limited portion* of the human race, including first and chiefly the Lord Jesus Christ, who in allusion to this promise is called by way of eminence *the seed*, Gal. 3. 16, 19, who came 'to destroy the works of the devil,' Heb. 2. 14. 1-John, 3. 8, and secondly, all the members of Christ his true people, the sincerely pious in every age and country. These constitute the spiritual body here called *the seed of the woman*, and they all bear the most implacable hatred to the wicked one, while he on the other hand is ac



16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; <sup>a</sup> in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children:

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 48. 6. Isa. 13. 8. & 21. 3. John 16. 21. 1 Tim. 2. 15.

tuated by an equally deadly hostility against them, and is incessantly plotting their injury and ruin. The warfare between these contending parties now commenced which has ever since been kept up, and will continue till a complete victory over the devil and his angels shall be obtained by Christ and his people.—*¶ It shall bruise thy head.* Heb. הוא ישובך ראש *it, or he, shall bruise, smite, or crush these as to thy head;* the masculine *he* denoting that Christ is more especially to be understood by the seed here spoken of. It was to be in consequence of his sufferings and death, and the power with which he was to be invested as Mediator, that the power of Satan was to be broken and a signal victory obtained over him. This was in fact the first gospel promise, and though Adam and Eve did not then probably understand its full import, yet it must have been a great consolation to them to be assured that the present advantage gained by the adversary was not to be a permanent one; that their posterity, though they might suffer in the struggle, should yet finally prevail and crush his evil empire in the world. Subsequently they were no doubt both instructed more largely in the bearing of the promise, and it is reasonable and charitable to presume that by faith in its provisions they received the pardon of their personal transgression, and again becoming heirs of that eternal life which they had forfeited by sin, were received at death into a far more glorious Paradise than that which they lost on earth.—*¶ Shall bruise his heel.* The least vital part in man, and where a bruise

<sup>a</sup> and thy desire *shall be to thy husband, and he shall <sup>a</sup> rule over thee.*

<sup>a</sup> w ch. 4. 7. x 1 Cor. 11. 3. & 14. 24. Eph. 5. 22, 23, 24. 1 Tim. 2. 11, 12. Tit. 2. 5. 1 Pet. 3. 1, 5, 6.

or injury would be attended with most trifling consequences. In a serpent, on the other hand, the life is more concentrated in the head. It is the head that is always struck at in the attempt to kill, and that which the serpent when in danger is most anxious to protect. From the malice of Satan he might suffer afflictions and persecutions, but in comparison with his better part they should be but as <sup>a</sup> bruise of the heel which could not endanger the spiritual and eternal life of the soul. This was out of the reach of the utmost efforts of the enemy. But as to him, his most vital part was most exposed, and upon that would the crushing foot of the promised seed fall with all its weight.

16. *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception.* Meaning according to the Hebrew idiom, thy sorrow in conception, i. e. the sorrow and pain of pregnancy and parturition. In this sense the term 'conception,' occurs in several instances. See Gen. 16. 4. Judg. 13. 3.—*¶ Thou shalt bring forth children.* Heb. בנים *sons*, under which term daughters also are comprehended, as appears from Ex. 22. 24. Ps. 128. 6.—*¶ Thy desire shall be to thy husband.* Heb. תשוקה *teshukah*. That is, thy desire shall be subject to the will and pleasure of thy husband; thine obedient regards shall be to thy husband; he shall be the lord of thy wishes and thus mainly control thy happiness. Arab. 'The direction of thee shall be with thy husband.' The same phrase occurs ch. 4. 7, to express the deference and obsequious respect which Abel should evince towards Cain his elder brother, who was to possess this

17 And unto Adam he said, <sup>7</sup> Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, <sup>2</sup> and hast eaten of the tree <sup>a</sup> of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: <sup>b</sup> cursed is the

<sup>y</sup> 1 Sam. 15. 23. <sup>z</sup> ver. 6. <sup>a</sup> ch. 2. 17. <sup>b</sup> Eccl. 1. 2, 3. Isa. 24. 5, 6. Rom. 8. 20.

superiority in virtue of his birthright. The latter clause, therefore, 'he shall rule over thee,' is explanatory of the words. The sentence we understand as a prophecy rather than as an enactment which was to be always binding. It is, if we mistake not, the announcement of a fact that should occur with respect to a large portion of the sex and through a long period of time, but not one that should hold universally or perpetually. As Eve in yielding to the tempter acted alone without subjecting her desires to the counsel or consent of her husband, so now as a penalty for her perverseness it is *announced*, that she, in the persons of her descendants, should be made to suffer from the cruel and tyrannical treatment of the other sex. Instead of being considered as an equal and a companion, woman should be subjected to degradation and viewed as little better than the slave of an imperious master. We have only to consult the history of the race to see how completely this has been fulfilled, particularly in the East, in all ages down to the present time. Wherever the light of Christianity has not penetrated, women have been invariably the subjects of oppression and have groaned in the bitterness of their lot, though often unaware that any higher destiny was ever designed for them. But the spirit of Christianity is opposed to this barbarous lordship, and in proportion as it prevails never fails to relieve woman

in marital authority and restore her to her proper grade in society; and

ground for thy sake; <sup>c</sup> in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 <sup>d</sup> Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and <sup>e</sup> thou shalt eat the herb of the field:

<sup>c</sup> Job. 5. 7. Eccl. 2. 23. <sup>d</sup> Job 31. 40. <sup>e</sup> Ps. 104. 14.

whenever it shall universally prevail we may confidently hope that this part of her severe sentence will be done away.

17. *Hast hearkened unto.* Hast given heed to, hast obeyed.—*¶ Cursed be the ground for thy sake.* As the blessing of God upon any of his creatures usually carries with it the idea of increase, abundance, multiplication, so on the contrary the curse involves the opposite of all this, and in relation to the earth implies, that it should be deprived in great measure of its fertility, that it should not pour forth its products in the same profusion, nor should man avail himself of them with the same ease, as before. Its productiveness should be so far impaired that the fruits necessary to his subsistence should be, as it were, *extorted* from it with labour and toil, with weariness and sweat. Extensive regions should be condemned to utter barrenness, while its spontaneous productions should be thorns, and thistles, and briars, and weeds. That which in his state of innocence would have been merely a pleasant recreation, was henceforth to become a drudgery and a burden scarcely to be borne. This was to be *for man's sake*, or on account of his sin, or as far as he was concerned; and as the earth was created for his use and made a part of his possession, it was right that it should become in consequence of the curse pronounced upon it instrumental in the punishment of its offending lord—one who had so

19 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: & for dust

f Eccl. 1. 13. 2 Thess. 3. 10. g ch. 2. 7.

greatly abused its bounties and shown himself unworthy of the provision made for his happiness.—¶ *In sorrow shalt thou eat of it.* That is, in painful and exhausting labour; whence the Psalmist Ps. 127. 2, speaks of eating the *bread of sorrow*, i. e. bread procured by excessive care and toil.—¶ *Thou shalt eat the herbs of the field.* As a vegetable diet was undoubtedly designed for man from the beginning, by his here being appointed to eat of the herb of the field as a part of his punishment is implied probably that there was to be a change, a coming down, from the more grateful and delicious kinds of food to which he had been used in paradise. The original for *field* often signifies a *cultivated field*, and the implication may be, that he was henceforth to eat of the fruit of those herbs or grains which require the hand of tillage for their production.

19. *Shalt thou eat bread.* Heb. לֶחֶם *lehem*. A general term for all kinds of food by which life is sustained. The sentence does not imply that all men were to devote themselves to the labours of agriculture, for there are various mechanical and other employments which it was foreseen would be equally essential to our highest well-being; but we are taught by the words that as a general rule some species of toilsome occupation is the appointed lot of all men; that they are not allowed to spend their lives in idleness and sloth. This is confirmed under the Christian dispensation, 2 Thess. 3. 10, 'For when we were with you this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat.'

20. *And Adam called his wife's name Eve.* Heb. חַוָּה *Havah*, *life*. Adam

thou *art*, and <sup>h</sup> unto dust shalt thou return.

20 And Adam called his wife's

<sup>h</sup> Job 22. 26. & 34. 15. Ps. 104. 29. Eccl. 3. 20. & 12. 7. Rom. 5. 12. Heb. 9. 27.

had before called her 'Isha' as a wife; here he calls her 'Havah' as a mother, though as yet in anticipation only. But the bestowment of the name indicated his faith in the promise of a future seed. Some however suppose that though the name was given by Adam, the reason here assigned for it was given by Moses. But we may properly understand the phrase 'was the mother' as equivalent to 'was to be the mother,' and whether the clause be referred to Adam or Moses is of little moment. It is plain it is spoken by divine inspiration. It is a question of more importance to determine whether Adam, in the bestowment of this name, had respect to any thing farther than her being the natural mother of all mankind. The probability, we think, is, that Adam had an eye more especially to the promise just given, that she was to be the mother of a seed that was to bruise the serpent's head, and so by being the progenitor of Christ was to be the mother of all that should have *spiritual life* in and through him; for 'as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made *alive*;' 'the second Adam is made a *quickening* (i. e. life-giving) spirit;' 'in him was *life*, and he is the *life*.' All mankind by the first Adam are in a state of death, dead in trespasses and sins, but Christ is a fountain of life by bruising the head of the serpent, and destroying him that had the power of death. All his *spiritual seed* are the truly *living ones*, and we see no reason why a special reference may not have been had to them in the prospective maternity here affirmed of Eve. The name in itself considered is indicative rather of the *quality* of her posterity, viz. *the living*, than of the *universality* of the relation

name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

21 Unto Adam also and to his

wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

which she was to sustain; and as a name is given for distinction's sake, it would seem that the name *Havah* must have been expressive of something which should distinguish her both from Adam and from all other mothers, which it does not, if its meaning be restricted simply to the sense of *natural life*. The annexed remarks of President Edwards on this passage go to set this subject in a still stronger point of view. 'It is remarkable that Adam had before given his wife another name, viz. *Isha*, when she was first created and brought to him; but now, that on the occasion of the fall, and what God had said upon it, he changes her name, and gives her a new name, viz. *Life*, because she was to be the mother of every one that has life; which would be exceeding strange and unaccountable if all that he meant was, that she was to be the mother of mankind. If that was all that he intended, it would have been much more likely to be given her at first, when God gave them that blessing, viz. 'Be fruitful and multiply,' by virtue of which she became the mother of mankind; and when mankind was hitherto in a state of life, and death had not yet entered into the world. But that Adam should not give her this name then, but call her *Isha*, and then, after that, change her name, and call her name *Life*, immediately upon their losing their life and glory, and coming under a sentence of death, with all their posterity, and the awful, melancholy shadow and darkness which death has brought on the whole world, occasioned by Eve's folly, is altogether unaccountable, if he had only meant, that she was the mother of mankind. It is moreover most probable, that Adam would give Eve her name from that which was her greatest honour, since it

is evident that he had respect to her honour in giving her this name. The name itself, *Life*, is honourable; and that which he mentions concerning her being the *mother of every living one*, is doubtless something he had respect to as honourable to her. Since he changed her name from *Isha* to her honour, it is most likely it would signify it in that which was her peculiar honour; but that was the most honourable of any thing that ever happened, or that ever would happen concerning her—that God said that she should be the mother of that SEED, that should bruise the Serpent's head. This was the greatest honour that God had conferred on her: and we find persons' names changed elsewhere to signify something that is their peculiar honour, as the new names of Abraham, Sarah, and Israel.' *Notes on the Bible, in loc.*

21. Did the Lord God make coats. Not immediately or by direct agency, but *he was the author of its being done*; he prompted, taught, or ordered them to do it for themselves. God is often said to do that which he merely commands, causes, or permits to be done. The institution of animal sacrifice was doubtless of divine appointment, and in consequence of this Adam was enabled to provide himself with clothing. In like manner it is said of Jacob, Gen. 37. 3, 'Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age, and *he made him a coat of many colours*;' i. e. he ordered or procured it to be made. See also Lev. 7. 8. Adam and his wife are mentioned severally and distinctly that it might be intimated that the clothing was adapted to the respective sex of each. On this was probably founded the prohibition Deut. 22. 5, 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, nei-

ther shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.'—  
 ¶ *Of skins.* That the beasts whose skins were allotted for a covering to our first parents on this occasion had been slain, it is natural to suppose; and there were no purposes for which they could have been slain, except those of food, of sacrifice, or of clothing. That they were not slain for food is evident from the fact that the grant of animal food was not made till the days of Noah, ch. 9. 3. Neither can it be admitted that they were slain merely for clothing; since it cannot be supposed that Adam would immediately after the sentence of the divine displeasure, have dared to kill God's creatures without his permission. Nor is it likely that God should order them to be slain solely for their skins, when man could have been supplied with garments made of other materials. It follows then that they must have been slain with a view to sacrifice. This alone supplies an adequate reason. The whole of the animal (as the primitive offerings were probably all *holocausts*) would here be devoted to the use of religion, except the *skin*, which would be employed for purposes of clothing. And even *this* might not be without its moral and religious ends; for while Adam and Eve thought only of a covering for their bodies, God pointed out to them a covering for their souls. They were despoiled of their original righteousness, and they needed a robe to cover their naked souls, that they might again stand before God 'without spot or blemish.' We undoubtedly see then in this incident the *first institution of animal sacrifices*; for that such a rite should have originated in mere human device cannot be maintained with any show of reason. How should it have entered into the mind of man to imagine that the blood of a beast could make satisfaction to God for sin? What

conceivable connection is there, apart from divine appointment, between the blood of a brute animal and the sins of a human being? Indeed there was much more reason to think that God would have been displeased with the unauthorized destruction of his creatures, than that he would so accept it as to forgive iniquity on account of it. Such an offering without a divine warrant would have been at best a mere act of superstitious will-worship, for which no one could have promised himself acceptance; for what superstition can be more gross than to believe without any authority for so doing, that God will transfer the sins of the sacrificer to the sacrifice, and that thus the sacrificer himself shall be pardoned? The very pagans themselves judged more rationally, for they are unanimous in ascribing the origin of sacrifice to a divine command. The divine acceptance therefore of the offerings must be regarded as a demonstration of a divine institution designed to prefigure the great atoning sacrifice, and that they were now appointed for the express purpose of directing the view of fallen man to the future propitiatory sacrifice which Christ should offer to God upon the cross. And how well such a symbolical rite was adapted to the end may be judged of from the following remarks by the Rev. J. P. Smith in his *Treatise on Atonement and Sacrifice*. 'The selection, presentation, and immolation of the unoffending animal, the regard paid to its blood, its consumption by fire, the solemn ceremonies which accompanied, and the particular confession and supplications of the worshipper,—must have powerfully impressed the ideas of sin and guilt, the desert of punishment, the substitution of the innocent, and the pardon of the transgressor. When men were accustomed to symbolical actions, such a signification would be more readily apprehended and more



22 ¶ And the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.

i ver. 5. Like Isa. 19. 12. & 47. 12, 13. Jer. 22. 23.

solemnly felt than under *our* circumstances and habits. The refinements of advanced society and the general use of letters, have made us far less sensible to the language of living signs than the ruder children of nature have always been. How much more must the impressions on the heart have been increased, when *the first* sacrifice was offered; when the parents of our race, recent from their guilty fall, were abased by the divine rebuke, driven from their blissful seat, and filled with dismay at the threatening of DEATH!—a threatening piercing their souls, but of the nature and effects of which they could form but a vague idea. But when directed by stern authority to apply some instrument of death to the lamb which, with endearing innocence, had sported around them, they heard its unexpected cries, they beheld the appalling sight of streaming blood and struggling agonies and life's last throes—they gazed upon the breathless body, —and they were told, THIS IS DEATH;—how stricken must they have been with horror such as no description could ever paint! And how would their horror be aggravated to think that they themselves were the guilty authors of so much misery to the beings around them? It is easy then to perceive with what important and salutary lessons the rite of sacrifice was fraught.'—For some farther views on the subject of sacrifices, see note on ch. 4. 3, 4.

22. *Behold the man is become as one of us.* The usual interpretation put upon this passage has been to consider it as an ironical mode of upbraiding Adam with the issue of his transgression; as an indignant taunt at his credulity in trusting to the tempter's prom-

And now, lest he put forth his hand, \* and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever:

k ch. 2. 9.

ise; q. d. 'Behold, all ye angels the fruit of man's rashness! See how he has obtained the object of his ambition! See what he has gained by listening to the voice of the serpent! See the pitch of divinity to which he has raised himself by his newly-acquired knowledge of good and evil!' It is by some objected to this that it attributes to the Most High an unbecoming levity at the awful period when he was determining the fate of his fallen creatures. But as this kind of holy sarcasm is sometimes employed in the Scriptures, there is perhaps no insuperable objection to this view of the meaning of the text. But a preferable interpretation we think is, to take the words as implying what the man had *aimed* and *attempted* to become, rather than what he actually *had* become. This is entirely agreeable to the Hebrew idiom by which an action is said to be done when it is merely attempted or proposed to be done. (See note on Gen. 37. 21.) This construction too is perhaps more in accordance with our natural sense of the gravity and solemnity of the whole proceeding, and makes the expression one rather of commiseration than of taunting reproach. Still the correctness of this interpretation cannot be positively affirmed.—¶ *And now, lest he put forth his hand, &c.* It will be observed that the sentence is defective, and is to be supplied in some such way as this;—'And now *care is to be taken* lest,' or 'Now he *must be driven forth* lest,' &c. The clause omitted is plainly hinted at in the commencement of the next verse, 'Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden.'—¶ *And take also of the tree of life, and live for ever.* That

23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of

Eden, <sup>1</sup>to till the ground from whence he was taken.

1 ch. 4. 2. & 9. 20.

is, in the hope, the vain hope, of living for ever. If it be asked how Adam would have sinned by eating of the fruit of the tree of life, which had not been prohibited, the proper answer is, that the sin would have consisted rather in the *purpose* than in the *act*—the purpose in this way to counteract and render null and void the sentence of death which he had incurred. Yet even in this he would have been disappointed, for the tree was intended merely as a sacramental pledge of the continuance of a happy life as long as he remained obedient, but was not, that we can learn, endowed with any *remedial* virtue to restore life when once lost. The language, it must be acknowledged, *seems* to imply, that, had man tasted of the tree of life, even after his rebellion, he would have lived for ever, and that he was expelled from Paradise to prevent such a consequence. But this, as appears from several considerations, is an erroneous view of the text. When the first pair violated the divine command, they immediately became mortal, subject to infirmity and death, agreeably to the penalty, 'in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' 'This was the original doom, and therefore they could not avoid the penalty, and become immortal by eating of the tree of life *after* their transgression. The sentence incurred by their sin, would unavoidably take effect in the time appointed by the Almighty, whatever attempt the fallen pair had made to reverse it. They had forfeited life and could not avoid the punishment of their guilt. They were expelled from Paradise, then, not because their eating of the tree of life would have rendered them immortal, but because it was proper that having forfeited the *thing signified*

they should henceforth be debarred from the *sign*. Thus viewed the exclusion is perhaps to be considered as an act of mercy, inasmuch as it cut the offenders off from the liability again to incur the divine displeasure by a renewed act of sin.

23. *Sent him forth from the garden.* The original denotes something more than a gentle dismissal. It is the term used in speaking of the divorce of a wife from her husband, which implies a violent separation. So here, as appears from the ensuing verse, it is probably to be understood as signifying a stern and angry ejection.—¶ *To till the ground from whence he was taken.* Referring either to the element from which he was formed, or to the ground *without* the precincts of paradise; for he was created *without* those limits and afterwards 'taken' and placed *within* them. The original term for 'till' is the word usually rendered to 'serve,' and denotes all that *servile work* which should be requisite to procure a subsistence, and which makes man, as it were, *a servant to the earth*. Thus Eccl. 5. 9, 'The profit of the earth is for all; the king himself *is served by the field* (Heb. *is servant to the field*).' His tilling the ground, however, would be compensated by his increased enjoyment of its fruits, and his converse with the earth would naturally be improved to keep him humble and remind him of his latter end. Thus the curse was in a measure overruled to be a blessing in more respects than one. The diminished fruitfulness of the earth has a merciful tendency to restrain the progress of sin, for if the whole earth were like the plains of Sodom in fertility, which are compared to the garden of God (Gen. 13. 10), its inhabitants would be very apt to be as Sodom and Gomorrah

24 So he drove out the man: and he placed <sup>m</sup> at the east of the garden of Eden <sup>n</sup> Cherubims, and

a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

m ch. 2. 8. n Ps. 104. 1. Heb. 1. 7.

in wickedness. The necessity of hard labour in obtaining a sustenance, which is the lot of the far greater portion of mankind, tends greatly by separating men from each other, and keeping down their spirits, to restrain them from the excesses of evil. Moreover, by experiencing the toils and hardships of life, man becomes more resigned to quit this world when commanded away by death, and is stimulated to fix his hopes of happiness on another and better state of existence.

24. *Placed cherubims and a flaming sword.* From subsequent descriptions it appears that the form of the cherubim was that of living creatures with wings, Ezek. 1. 5, and 10. 15, but Moses goes into no particulars here because he wrote for those who were familiar with the figure of the cherubim embroidered in the curtains of the tabernacle, Ex. 26. 1, and who were acquainted with the form and perhaps with the mystical purport of those that overshadowed the mercy-seat, Ex. 25. 18. Whether the cherubim here mentioned were real living beings, or merely the same kind of emblematic or hieroglyphical images that we afterwards read of, accompanied with a fiery splendor resembling the vibrations of a flaming sword, it is difficult to say. There is undoubtedly a great degree of obscurity resting upon the subject of the cherubim wherever mentioned in the Scriptures, but that they were ordinarily symbolical beings intimately connected with the *Shekinah*, or visible divine glory, is beyond question, as they formed an essential part of the apparatus of the tabernacle and temple, in which God in his visible manifestation dwelt. Indeed the very word here

employed and rendered 'placed' (יִשְׁכֵּן *yashkan*, made to dwell), is the root of *Shekinah*, a dwelling or tabernacling in a peculiar manner, as the God of Israel did among or between the cherubim—a mode of residence having a typical allusion to the future tabernacling in the flesh of his son Jesus Christ. If the cherubim here spoken of were really angels, as is generally supposed, still this does not militate with the idea that their office on this occasion was not only to keep man from re-entering the garden, but also to serve as a striking symbol of the same objects or truths as were afterwards represented by them in the tabernacle, the temple, the visions of Ezekiel, and the mystic scenes of the Apocalypse; and that these had reference to the most important things in the gospel economy is undeniable. The present was in fact, if we mistake not, the first introduction of that remarkable symbol which was subsequently to become a permanent representative of the deepest mysteries of redemption, one of which the Jewish writers say, 'it is the foundation, root, heart, and marrow of the whole Levitical dispensation.' 'Paradise to be a fit residence for uncontaminated innocence, must have been something more than a place of sensual ease and enjoyment; it was surely a school of religious instruction, a place especially adapted to excite sentiments of piety and devotion, a place designed to convey spiritual knowledge by the visible, but emblematical objects that it contained. If such was the general and sublime design of the Paradaical constitution, some highly instructive information must certainly have been intended to be conveyed by so splendid

and stupendous a display of celestial power as the cherubic emblems at the east of the garden of Eden. The best, perhaps the only means of communicating a knowledge of spiritual and invisible things in the early periods of the world was by symbolical representations; for which reason it was, in all likelihood, one of the modes by which the Almighty taught his creatures in the infancy of the human species. In attempting to explain the hieroglyphic meaning of the cherubim, it is easy for a luxuriant imagination to transgress the bounds of sobriety and reason; but some spiritual instruction they were doubtless meant to convey; and the proto-evangelical promise, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the Serpent, combined with the reflected light from subsequent revelations, points out the mystery of redemption as the leading object of the celestial vision. The free communication with the Tree of Life was forbidden to the fallen, rebellious creature, and the only access to it that now remained, was through the mediatorial office of a Redeemer, who has remedied the evil originating from the Fall. This was typically discovered in the glorious and cherubic appearance at the entrance of the garden of Eden, an appearance not intended to drive our first parents from the Tree of Life in terror, but to inspire them with hope, to demonstrate to them that the Divine mercy was still vouchsafed to man, though now fallen, and to be an emblematical representation of the covenant of grace.' *Holden.* This momentous emblem, however, we conceive, has never been adequately explained in all its bearings, but is yet destined to open an immensely important and interesting field of biblical research.—For further remarks on the import of the cherubim, see note on Exod. 25. 18—22.—¶ *And a flaming sword which turned every way.* Heb. 'the flame of a

sword turning itself.' It is not we suppose to be inferred from this that the cherubim were armed with flaming swords which they brandished on every side in an intimidating manner, but that there were flames of fire of the shape of swords streaming or darting out from the midst of the cherubim, and displaying a constant flickering motion that would naturally strike terror into every one that approached. Similar fiery appearances are mentioned in connection with the cherubim in the remarkable vision of Ezekiel, ch. 1. 13, and are perhaps alluded to by the apostle, Heb. 1. 7, 'Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.'

**REMARKS.**—This chapter contains the record of the darkest, the most disastrous event, that has ever occurred in the history of our world. Indeed every other calamity by which the earth has been afflicted is to be traced to this as its primal source. Among the solemn reflections to which it gives rise are the following:—

(1.) We learn from it the unspeakable malignity of Satan as the grand enemy and tempter of mankind. What a fiendish disposition is that here manifested in plotting and effecting the ruin of the first pair, with their unborn posterity! How deadly must have been the hatred to purity and goodness which actuated him in this foul transaction! No injury or provocation had he received from them; no personal resentment or spirit of revenge could have prompted him to the fatal deed. It was the pure unmixed malignity of his nature that goaded him on to compass the overthrow of primeval innocence. It was hatred to goodness for goodness' sake. And let us not forget that such is the nature of all sin. Though it may differ in degree, in kind it is the same. The children of the wicked one, though prevented by the various restraints of providence from acting out

all the evil that dwells in their hearts, are continually prompted to do the works of their father. It is he who lives and acts in them, and who is still aiming with a restless malice to extend and perpetuate the mischief which he here began. And his policy is still the same. He approaches the citadel of our hearts in the same covert and subtle manner, and in order to detect his machinations we have only to ask respecting any tempter, Does he lessen in our eyes the sinfulness of sin? Does he weaken our apprehensions of its danger? Does he persuade us to that which is forbidden? Would he make us think lightly of that which is threatened? Does he stimulate our desires after evil by considerations of the profit or pleasure that will attend it? Does he calumniate God to us as though he were unfriendly, oppressive, or severe? If our temptations be accompanied by any of these things, we may know assuredly that 'the enemy hath done this,' and that he is seeking our destruction. Let us then be on our guard against him. Let us watch and pray that we enter not into temptation. However remote we may imagine ourselves to be from danger, let us not be over-confident. For if, under all the advantages which they enjoyed, he vanquished our first parents, he will certainly overcome us, unless we resist him 'strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.'

(2.) How vast and awful the change that has taken place in our condition, and how deplorable the state of every unregenerate man? Many among Adam's descendants have experienced the melancholy transition from health to sickness, from ease to pain; many have passed from riches to poverty, from glory to shame, and not a few have exchanged empire itself for banishment or a dungeon. But in consequence of the sin of Eden more than the accumulated weight of all these at once has fallen upon the devoted heads of our guilty

race. Despoiled of the holy image of our Maker, filled with vicious and hateful dispositions, loaded with the displeasure of the Almighty, we are subjected in the present world to troubles, diseases, disorders, and death, and in the eternal world, to indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish for evermore. In this direful complication of evils and woes we are all by nature involved; not a son or daughter of Adam is exempt; and yet how little are our minds affected with the truth of our condition? The amazing change that has passed upon us is not more wonderful than the insensibility to it which every where prevails. Alas! how mighty is the power of that depravity which reigns in and over us! Were it not for the delusion which accompanies it, we should smite upon our breasts in sorrow and anguish, and implore without delay the mercy that we so much need.

(3.) We learn hence how astonishing was the divine mercy in providing for us a Saviour. It is needless to say that our first parents could do nothing to repair the evil which they had committed. But God with infinite benignity interposed and announced a purpose of mercy immediately after the fall. As if he feared that the sentence would overwhelm the unhappy culprits, he hastens to declare the tidings of recovery before he declared their condemnation and ruin. With the promise of a Saviour he cheered the hearts which were yielding to the dark dominion of despair. To this gracious promise we owe it, that we are not all involved in endless and irremediable misery. What reason have heaven and earth to stand astonished at the goodness of our God! In what an amiable character does the Most High here appear! What instance of divine mercy can be conceived of more tender, more condescending, more captivating than this, that self-moved and unsolicited he should have purpos-



## CHAPTER IV.

AND Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

## CHAPTER IV.

1. *I have gotten a man from the Lord.*

Heb. קניתי איש את יהוה *I have gotten a man (even) the Jehovah, or with Jehovah.* Gr. *δια του Θεου* by God. She accordingly bestowed upon him the name *Cain* implying *possession* or rather *acquisition*. It is not perhaps to be understood from this that Eve really imagined that the son now born was the divine personage promised as the Messiah, but recollecting the gracious assurance recorded ch. 3. 15, she is now on the birth of her first-born so fully persuaded of the truth of the promise, that although she may never be privileged to see the predicted seed in person, yet by faith she already *possesses* him, and in token thereof bestows upon her child a name which should be a standing testimony of her faith to all succeeding generations. Thus the patriarchs, Heb. 11. 13, 'not having received the promises (i. e. the things promised) but having seen them afar off were persuaded of them and embraced them.' It is but just, however, to observe that the words may literally be rendered, 'I have obtained a man even Jehovah,' and may be considered as expressing her eager and pious, though mistaken, expectation, that the above promise was now actually accomplished. The primary and usual force of the participle *אֵת* *eth* placed here before Jehovah is to designate an object in the

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

a ch. 3. 23. & 9. 20.

most emphatical and demonstrative manner, and the Targum of Jonathan renders it, 'I have gotten a man the angel of Jehovah,' which was an established appellation of the Messiah in the latter period of the Jewish church. 'Our first parents must have had their minds directed habitually and with strong feelings of interest towards the promised seed which was to triumph over the destroyer of their happiness, and the birth of their first child must have been productive of the deepest impressions on their minds. Notwithstanding what they might have observed in animals, the severe and unexpected pains endured could not but occasion great distress and alarm. Yet equally great would be the delight when the pains suddenly ceased, and a new human creature was brought to view. Let any tender mother recollect her own feelings on the first enjoyment of this blessing, and let her then try to imagine what must have been the feelings of the *first* mother on the *first* occasion of a child being brought into the world! The most vivid imagination must probably fall short of conceiving the reality of this most impressive case. It would seem to have been an idea not merely probable, but *inevitable*, to Adam and Eve, that the beautiful and lovely creature thus presented to them by the providence of their God was indeed the destined Deliverer.' *J. P. Smith.* This is a plausible view of the subject, but we still incline to the opinion that in the birth of Cain she did not recognise the wished-for Redeemer himself, but simply a proof and pledge of his appearance in due time.

2. *And she again bare his brother*

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought <sup>b</sup> of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4 And Abel, he also brought of

• the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had <sup>d</sup> respect unto Abel, and to his offering:

b Num. 18. 12.

c Num. 18. 17. Prov. 3. 9. d Heb. 11. 4.

*Abel.* The name *Abel* (Heb. אֵבֶל *Hebel*) signifies *vanity*, or a *soon vanishing vapour*, a term applied by the Psalmist to the human race in general. Ps. 39. 5, 'Verily every man at his best estate is altogether *vanity* (Heb. *Hebel*).' So also the apostle James, ch. 4. 14, 'For what is your life? It is even a *vapour* that appeareth for a little time and then *vanisheth away*.' Perhaps his parents were secretly overruled to give him a name of prophetic import in allusion to his untimely and mournful end, many instances of which occur in the Scriptures. See note on Gen. 5. 29.—¶ *Abel was a keeper of sheep.* Heb. 'A feeder, or shepherd, of a flock,' which in the original comprehends both sheep and goats, as appears from Lev. 1. 10. Whether these employments were of their own selection respectively, or appointed them by their father, is uncertain; but it is plainly to be inferred that the brothers had been brought up by their parents to habits of active labour instead of indolence and ease—an example set by the father of the race worthy to be followed by all other fathers. Abel the younger is here named before Cain the elder either because his employment was considered the more honourable, or as an intimation of the precedency which, as a general fact, the younger son was to obtain over the elder. See note on Gen. 9. 24.

3. *In process of time.* Heb. מֵקֵץ יָמִים *at the end of days*. That is, probably, *at the end of the year*, the time at which the feast of the ingathering was afterwards kept, Ex. 23. 16. The expression, however, is in itself indefinite, and may denote the end of the year, the end of the week, or the expi-

ration of any set period when this service was to be performed. Adam had taught his sons the duty of religious worship as well as that of industrious toil in some useful occupation.—¶ *Brought.* That is, either to the place appointed for the special worship of God, where the Shekinah or visible glory was displayed, or to Adam as the officiating priest of the family, or, which is perhaps still more probable, *brought* here is to be understood as synonymous with *offered*, a usage of very frequent occurrence.—¶ *Of the fruit of the ground an offering.* Heb. מִנְחָה *mincha*, an oblation, usually rendered *meal-offering*; Lev. 2. 1, 4, 7, although, as it consisted of flour, cakes, wafers, &c., a more correct version would be *meal-offering* or *wheat-offering*. But the English word *meat*, at the time when the present translation was made, was applied to farinaceous as well as animal substances. Thus Prov. 23. 3, 'Be not desirous of his dainties, for they are *deceitful meat* (Heb. bread of lies).' 1 Sam. 20. 34, 'And Jonathan did eat no *meat* (Heb. bread of food) on the second day of the month.' The *Mincha* when given by one man to another denotes some peculiar dignity in the receiver, of which such a gift is the acknowledgment, and is a token of subjection, or at least submission on the part of the giver. But when a *Mincha* is presented by man to God it usually, though not invariably, signifies a *bloodless oblation* in contradistinction from the זֶבַח *zeba*, or *bloody sacrifice*, which constituted Abel's offering, though the *Mincha* was for the most part joined with the *Zeba* in the sacred oblations.

4. *Brought of the firstlings of his*

*flock.* Either the first-born, which God afterwards, by an express law, appropriated to himself, or the choicest and best of the flock; as the *chief* of any thing is frequently called the *first-born*, Job 18. 13. Jer. 31. 19. Heb. 12. 23.—¶ *The fat thereof.* Heb. 'the fatnesses of them.' A similar remark to the above is applicable to this term also. The *fat* of any thing is equivalent to the *best part* of it. Thus Num. 18. 2, 'All the *best* (Heb. the fat) of the oil, and all the *best* (Heb. the fat) of the wine,' &c. Gen. 45. 18, 'And I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat of the *fat* of the land.' Ps. 147. 14, 'He filleth thee with the *finest* (Heb. the fat) of the wheat.' The offerings of Abel, however, we suppose to have been holocausts—¶ *The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.* That is, kindly and favourably regarded, had complacency in. Chal. 'He accepted with good will Abel and his gifts.' As the apostle Heb. 11. 4, informs us that God testified his approbation of Abel's offering, it is reasonable to suppose that this was done by the visible token of fire from heaven consuming it upon the altar. The Hebrew word denotes to look with a rapid and keen glance of the eye, indicating special earnestness. It is apparently with great propriety therefore, that Theodotion renders it ενεπυρισεν kindled or set on fire; upon which Jerome remarks, 'How could Cain know that God accepted his brother's offering and rejected his own, unless the translation which Theodotion has given be the true one?' If it were not by this particular token that Abel understood that God was propitious to him, it must have been by some other equally indubitable. Comp. Lev. 9. 24. Jud. 6. 21. 1 Kings, 13. 38. 2 Chron. 7. 1. For a correct view of the reason of the more favourable acceptance of Abel's offering, we must have recourse to the words of the Apostle Heb. 11. 4,

who tells us, that 'by *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice (Gr. πλειονα θυσιαν) than Cain,' or as Wickliff's translation with more literal exactness renders it, 'a much more sacrifice,' i. e. a more full or complete sacrifice. Here by declaring the offering of Abel to have been made by faith, the writer teaches by necessary implication that Cain's offering was *not* made by faith, and hence undoubtedly it is, that the sacrifice of Abel is said to have been more *full, complete, and excellent* than Cain's. It was distinguished by a principle which the other lacked. Cain undoubtedly had a general belief or persuasion that God would accept his oblation, for the very act of offering a sacrifice involves the persuasion of the sacrificer that it would be acceptable. But the faith here spoken of is of a more particular kind. It is evident from the context that the faith which the apostle celebrates is a *prospective faith in Christ*. Faith then in Christ was the faith of Abel, and this faith was that which Cain wanted. His offering was a mere acknowledgment of God as a benefactor. It was just what a self-righteous heart would offer. It plainly evinced that he recognised no material breach between him and his Creator, nor any need of confession of sin or dependence on an atonement. He had indeed so far a sense of religious obligation as to thank God for the benefits of his providence, but he evidently thought it sufficient to trust solely to the divine mercy and his own good works for acceptance. But as this was virtually denying the only revealed plan of grace and pardon to sinners, his offering was rejected. His conduct showed that he preferred the conclusions of his own reason to the express appointment of his Creator. The two brothers therefore may be considered as the representatives of two great classes of men found in all ages, one of whom serve God merely accord

5 But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, \* and his countenance fell.

6 And the LORD said unto Cain,

e ch. 31. 2

ing to the light of natural reason: which instead of dictating the propriety of animal sacrifices, would simply require the expression of thanksgiving and homage, while the other have a single eye to the divine precept as to the true mode of seeking God, and always recognize the principle laid down by the apostle, Heb. 9. 22, that 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission.'

5. *Cain was very wroth.* Displeased, disaffected, angry. The original implies an *inflamed* and *burning* anger, or fierce resentment. He was indignant at the marks of the divine favour bestowed upon Abel and denied to himself. His eye was evil because God was good. He was not only angry with his Maker for not accepting his services, but enraged with his brother because he was evidently the object of the divine complacency rather than himself. The excellence of Abel's character served only to add fuel to the flame. His virtues were his faults; so true is it that the wicked dislike the good for no other cause than their goodness—an awful argument of the deep depravity of our nature. Cain hated in his brother the divine image as much as he envied him the divine favour. The light of his brother's example was offensive to his eyes; and on this account he sought to extinguish it.—¶ *His countenance fell.* That is, it henceforward assumed a downcast, gloomy, sullen aspect. The workings of his envious and malicious spirit showed themselves in his looks, and like the gathering cloud before the tempest were a presage of the terrible result that followed.

Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

7. *If thou doest well*, or Heb. 'doest good.' By which we are taught that what God esteems *well-doing* consists not so much in outward offerings or services as in the state of the heart, in a truly pious spirit, and especially in the exercise of a simple faith in the divine declarations and promises. 'In these words it is plainly implied that Abel acted 'well,' i. e. righteously, in the business of his sacrifice; and that Cain acted 'not well,' i. e. unrighteously, in the business of *his* sacrifice. This righteousness in Abel, by which he obtained the preference to his brother, the apostle ascribes to his 'faith.' Here we see that the first act of *worship which God accepted* with open marks of approbation, was a *sacrifice*, in which the life of one of his creatures was devoutly offered up to him; and that what made it acceptable was the *faith* of the offerer. In this account are contained two points: (1.) That sacrifice was from the beginning acceptable to God; and (2.) That faith made it so.—Nothing is more absurd than to imagine that God could ever be gratified or appeased by the destruction of his creatures. Such an action is not in itself acceptable to God; and therefore nothing but *duty* could make it acceptable; and nothing but the *command* of God could make it a duty in the case before us. No action is just or good otherwise than as it is conformable to the *will of God* either revealed or established in the nature of things. But that such an action as this was conformable to the divine will could only be known by *revelation*, i. e. by being commanded; therefore the rectitude of

it could only arise from *obedience*, and obedience (alone) could justify it.' *Delaney*. Thus the divine institution of sacrifices would seem to be unquestionable.—¶ *Shalt thou not be accepted?* An interrogation carrying with it the force of an affirmation; implying that the principle of the divine dealings was so well known to Cain, that he might be directly and confidently appealed to respecting it. The scope of the passage is clearly to intimate that God's respect to sincere obedience was impartial; that he rewarded it wherever he found it; and that if Cain's offering was not equally acceptable with that of his brother, the fault was purely his own. He had only to evince the same piety of spirit with Abel to receive the same tokens of approbation.—The original word for *acceptance* properly signifies *lifting up*, *elevation*, *excellency*, and points not only to the removal of his sadness, of that gloomy and dejected air which he exhibited, and the lifting up of his face in the erectness of conscious innocence, but also that *precedence* and *preeminence* which formed a part of his birthright as the elder brother. In this sense the word unquestionably occurs Gen. 49. 3, 'Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of *dignity* (Heb. *רָוַע* *elevation*, *eminence*).' From the latter clause of the verse it is evident that God alludes to the prerogatives of the birthright which Cain would be in no danger of losing if his conduct were such as it ought to be.—¶ *And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.* Heb. *רָבַץ* *croucheth*. That is, the guilt and punishment of sin await thee; deserved judgment shall follow close upon thy transgression; it shall be like a fierce mastiff or furious beast of prey *crouching*, as it were, at the very door of thy house to seize upon thee unawares. By enclosing these words in a parenthesis, ■ far more clear

and satisfactory view of the coherency of the verse is obtained and the common, but somewhat forced version, 'a sin-offering,' rendered unnecessary. The sense of the passage, then, may be given thus:—'If thou doest well, shalt thou not enjoy the appointed preeminence? (but if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door) and unto thee shall be his obsequious respect, and thou shalt rule over him.' This construction brings the first and last clauses of the verse into immediate connection, and in such a way, if we mistake not, as to afford the only true key to the interpretation.—'There are some who affect to smile at the idea of *SIN* lying at the door: it is, however, an Eastern figure. Ask a man who is unacquainted with Scripture, what he understands by *sin lying at the threshold of the door*; he will immediately speak of it as the guilt of some great crime which the owner had committed. A man accused of having murdered a child, would be accosted in the following language:—'If you have done this, think not to escape; no! for sin will ever lie at your door: it will descend from generation to generation.' To a man accused of having committed any other dreadful crime, it would be said, 'Ah! if I had done it, do I not know sin would ever lie at my door?' The idea is sin personified in the shape of some fierce animal crouched at the door. Its criminality and punishment remain. Taking the other view of it, *seems* to amount to this; Now, Cain, if thou doest well that will be thy excellency, thou shalt be accepted: but if thou doest not well, it is a matter of no very great consequence, because there is a sin-offering at thy door.' *Roberts*.—¶ *Unto thee shall be his desire*. That is, Abel's desire. See this phrase explained in the note on Gen. 3. 16. That the respect and honour implied in this expression was a distinction of the elder brother forming an important part



¶ And Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass when they were in the field, that

Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

1 Matt. 23. 35. 1 John 3. 12. Jude. 11.

of the birthright is clear from Gen. 27. 29, 'Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee; *be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.*' If, as Venema supposes, Cain understood from the tokens of the divine approbation towards Abel that he had forfeited the birthright and that it was now transferred to the younger brother, it will account more satisfactorily for the settled hatred which now took possession of his breast. It makes the case of Cain also entirely analogous to that of Esau and of Joseph's brethren, whose disaffection towards the favoured one arose from precisely the same cause. See note on Gen. 37. 3, 4.

7. *And Cain talked with Abel his brother.* Heb. 'And Cain said unto Abel his brother;' after which there is, in many of the Hebrew copies, a blank space left, as if something had been omitted. Accordingly the Sept. and Sam. versions supply the supposed omission by adding the words, 'Let us go into the fields;' but for such a supple ment there is no authority beyond conjecture, nor is it at all necessary. The meaning probably is that Cain dissembled his hatred, conversing freely and familiarly with his brother, till an opportunity occurred of executing his murderous purpose. Had he disclosed the sentiments of his heart, he would have put his brother on his guard; whereas by feigning affection towards him he would remove all fear and suspicion from the mind of his intended victim, and thus facilitate the accomplishment of the fatal deed. To similar means assassins have had recourse in all ages. It was thus that Joab slew Abner and Amasa; 2 Kings 3. 26, 27. He sent messengers after Abner, and took him aside in the gate to speak with

him quietly.' 2 Sam. 20. 9, 10, 'To Amasa he said, Art thou in health, my brother? and took him by the beard to kiss him;' but these pretences of friendship, like those of Cain on this occasion, were only to secure access to their persons that he might with surer effect strike the dagger to their hearts. In like manner Absalom compassed the murder of Amon, making a hospitable entertainment a cover to effect the destruction of his brother in the midst of his convivial mirth. Viewed in this light the treachery of Cain awfully enhanced his guilt as a fratricide. Had it been the effect of sudden wrath, though criminal beyond expression, yet our instinctive feelings would have found some apology for him; but being the result of premeditation and contrivance, of deceit and treachery, its enormity is increased an hundred-fold. —¶ *Rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.* 'And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous,' 1 John, 3. 12. In this fearful transaction we trace the legitimate results of an indulged envious spirit. There is indeed such a connection between the links of the chain of evils mentioned by the apostle, 'envy, debate, deceit, murder,' that wherever the first is harboured the rest would follow of course, if God in his infinite mercy did not interpose to limit the operation of our sinful propensities. 'O envy, the corrosive of all ill minds, and the root of all desperate actions! The same cause that moved Satan to destroy the first man, the same moves the second man to destroy the third.—If there be an evil heart there will be an evil eye;—and if both these, there will be an evil hand. There never was an envy that was not bloody; if not in act, yet in affection.' *Bp. Hall.*

9 ¶ And the LORD said unto Cain, <sup>g</sup> Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, <sup>h</sup> I know not: *Am I my brother's keeper?*

<sup>g</sup> Ps. 9. 12. <sup>h</sup> John 8. 44.

Death thus began its ravages, and the first man that died, died a martyr for religion. But though his parents' hearts must have bled over the mangled remains of their son, yet they doubtless felt acuter pangs for living Cain than for dead Abel. He died in faith; and, from a sinner on earth, became a saint in heaven. He was the first of the noble army of martyrs, the first of human kind who entered the abodes of the blessed.

9. *Where is Abel thy brother?* A question proposed not for the sake of obtaining information, but to awaken in the culprit a sense of his crime and thus to lead him to repentance. The words 'thy brother' would tend to remind him of the tender ties of flesh and blood which he had broken, and if he had any workings of conscience remaining within him, must have pierced him to the quick. The circumstance affords moreover a striking instance of the divine forbearance that God should have dignified to hold a colloquy with one whom his justice might have smitten down by a sudden stroke. But he would set an example of clemency by affording to the most guilty an opportunity of speaking in his own defence.—¶ *I know not, am I my brother's keeper?* Alas! how inseparable the connection between guilt and falsehood! He who dares to commit sin will never hesitate to cover it with a lie! It would hardly be possible to express in human language a reply more fraught with falsehood, insolence, and contempt of divine authority than is couched in these words. He not only boldly denies all knowledge of the fact, but with amazing hardihood charges impertinence upon his Judge in putting to him this

9\*

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 12. 24. Rev. 6. 10.

question, as if he had no right to interrogate him respecting it! 'Am I my brother's keeper.' Is he not capable of taking care of himself? Does he need a guardian? or was I appointed one over him? Had he been innocent the question would have awakened the deepest anxiety in his bosom; for a kindly concern for those who are near to us by kindred is not only one of the first duties of religion, but one of the most instinctive promptings of nature. But what a hardened indifference to a brother's fate is indicated in every word, and what fearful impiety must that have been which could give rise to such an answer! Indeed were it not for the indisputable record of the facts, it would be scarcely conceivable that a worm of the dust should have been guilty of such heaven-daring effrontery.

10. *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.* He had effectually silenced his brother's voice; so that no testimony could be borne by him. But the blood which he had shed had a voice which cried aloud; a voice which reached the throne of Almighty God and brought him down to plead the cause of injured innocence. Indeed every sin has a voice which speaks powerfully in the ears of God, and calls for vengeance on the head of him who has committed it. But it is not always that the vengeance wakes so suddenly as in the present instance. The Hebrew instead of 'voice of thy brother's blood' has 'voice of thy brother's bloods,' which the Chaldee Targum thus interprets;—'The voice of the bloods of the generations (the multitudes of just men) which should have proceeded from thy brother.' The word however in the plural usually signifies

11 And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto

thee her strength: A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

*murder* and its consequent guilt, and the habitual perpetrators of this crime are called by the Psalmist, Ps. 5. 7, '*men of bloods.*' This is probably its import here. The original for *crieth* is in the plural agreeing with *bloods*—'are crying'—an idiom of peculiar emphasis, which cannot well be transferred into English. In allusion to and by way of contrast to this blood of Abel demanding vengeance, it is said, Heb. 12. 24, that the blood of Christ speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, i. e. cries for pardon.

11. *Cursed from the earth.* Heb. אֲדָמָה *ground.* That is, in regard to the ground; as far as the ground is concerned. That ground which had drank the blood of a murdered brother was to become an instrument of inflicting the merited punishment upon the guilty fratricide. Nature herself is here represented as setting her face against one who had violated the most sacred of human ties. The earth is made to harden her bosom against the cruel wretch, who could so far conquer every fraternal feeling as to shed the blood of an unoffending brother. The precise manner in which this part of the sentence was to be carried into effect is described in the ensuing verse.

12. *It shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength.* Heb. 'It shall not add to yield.' A further explanation of the curse denounced above. The earth, as a general rule, was designed to afford its occupants *sustenance and settlement.* But both these are in great measure here denied to Cain. The ordinary amount of labour would not suffice to procure the ordinary returns from the

cultivated soil. A curse superadded to the original one denounced for Adam's offence should cause the earth comparatively to withhold its increase; and not only so it should, in a sense, deny him a permanent abode. He was thenceforth to become a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, condemned to perpetual disgrace and reproach among men. Instead of dwelling in peace among his own family and kindred, he was to be banished from their society, and compelled to withdraw to some distant and lonely part of the earth, as a wretched outcast abhorred and rejected of all his kind. To this were to be added the stings of a guilty conscience, the perpetual disquietude and horror that would not fail to haunt the breast of the first murderer. Yet even in this severe sentence there was a mixture of mercy, inasmuch as he was not immediately cut off but had space given him to repent; for God is long-suffering and not willing that any should perish.

13. *My punishment is greater than I can bear.* Heb. עֲוֹנִי my iniquity, my sin. But we have elsewhere remarked (ch. 19. 15,) that the original for *sin* is often used but as another term for the *punishment of sin*, and such is perhaps the true rendering here. Yet it may be remarked that the Heb. will admit the rendering, 'My sin is greater than can be forgiven,' as if it were the exclamation of one who was just sinking in despair. This mode of speech, it appears, is still common in the East. 'Has a person committed a great crime; he will go to the offended individual and piteously plead for mercy, and at intervals keep crying, 'Ah, my guilt is too great

14 \* Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and <sup>1</sup> from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, <sup>m</sup> that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

k Job 15. 20—24. l Ps. 51. 11. m ch. 9. 6. Num. 35. 19, 21, 27.

to be forgiven. My hopes are gone.' Roberts. On the whole, however, the former is, we think, the correct interpretation, and yet we know not that it is necessarily to be understood as a crimination of the sentence of the Judge. We take it rather as the voluntary acknowledgment and recital of the overwhelming yet deserved misery which he had brought upon himself by his murderous act. As human nature is constituted, we see not how the inward insuppressible voice of conscience could have failed to respond to the sentence uttered against him, and if it did so respond, it is scarcely conceivable that these words were those of *remonstrance*. They were rather a natural exclamation in view of the fearful consequences of his guilt of which he had now become sensible, and which he goes on to specify at length in the ensuing verse. Whether there was any thing of the working of penitence in his confession, does not appear from the text. The probability is that it was the prompting of remorse rather than of godly sorrow, and so was merely equivalent to the extorted confession of Judas, Mat. 27. 4, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.'

14. *Thou hast driven me out this day.* He now proceeds to specify the circumstances which conspired to make his doom so intolerable; and so well assured is he of the execution of the sentence, that he speaks of it as already accomplished.—¶ *From the face of the earth.* Heb. 'from the face of the ground.' That is, from that region

15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him, <sup>n</sup> seven-fold. And the LORD <sup>o</sup> set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

n Ps. 79. 12. o Ezek. 9. 4, 6.

which I have hitherto inhabited and cultivated. The original is not the word usually rendered *earth* (אֶרֶץ), but a term of narrower import frequently implying *tilled* or *improved ground* (אֶדְמָה), as in v. 11. It is evident that it cannot mean *earth* in its largest sense, for in that he was to be a fugitive and vagabond.—¶ *From thy face shall I be hid.* That is, from the place where thy presence is most peculiarly manifested, from the visible symbols of thy glory, and so from converse and communion with thee. See on v. 16.—¶ *Every one that findeth me shall slay me.* Will attempt to slay me, will be prompted to do it. Mr. Roberts remarks that modern usages of speech among the Orientals illustrate this language of Cain. 'Has a man escaped from prison; the people say, 'Ah, all men will catch and bring that fellow back.' Has a man committed murder; 'Ah, all men will kill that murderer.' This means, the feeling will be universal; all will desire to have that individual punished.' The question may here be asked whom, besides his father and mother, Cain had to fear? To this it may be answered, that as the death of Abel probably occurred somewhat upwards of a hundred years from the creation, ch. 5. 5, and Adam had many sons and daughters besides those here mentioned, ch. 5. 4, the population of the earth might at this time have increased to many hundreds or even thousands of souls. It was by no means the object of the sacred writer to give a full account of all Adam's

16 ¶ And Cain <sup>p</sup> went out from the presence of the LORD, and

p 2 Kings 13. 23. & 24. 20. Jer 23. 39. & 52. 3.

children and their descendants, but to narrate more especially the history of that line of his posterity from which the promised seed was to spring.

15. *Therefore.* That is, in order to prevent this, I announce to thee that whosoever slayeth thee, 'vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold,' i. e. he shall be far more severely punished than Cain himself. *Seven-fold* is equivalent to *many-fold*, a definite for an indefinite mode of speech, as often elsewhere, Lev. 26. 28. Ps. 12. 7. God having virtually said to Cain, 'vengeance is mine, I will repay,' it would have been a daring usurpation for any one to have taken the sword out of his hand, and such an act as he would cause to be avenged seven-fold. —¶ *The Lord also set a mark upon Cain.* Or, Heb. 'the Lord appointed a sign to Cain.' The original word here employed (אֶרֶב) often signifies a sign, token, or memorial by which something is confirmed or brought to remembrance. Thus Is. 7. 10, 'The Lord spake unto Ahaz saying, Ask thee a sign (אֶרֶב) of the Lord thy God.' So also v. 14, 'Therefore the Lord thy God shall give you a sign (אֶרֶב).' Jud. 6. 17, 'If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign (אֶרֶב) that thou talkest with me.' The sign here said to be appointed to Cain is undoubtedly to be understood in the same manner. It was some kind of *notification* to him, perhaps by a sensible miracle, of the truth of the promise respecting his personal safety. Accordingly it is well rendered in the Greek, 'God set a sign before Cain to persuade him that whosoever should find him should not kill him.' As to its being a visible mark, brand, or stigma affixed to his person, there is no ground whatever for such an opinion.—It would seem that Cain

dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

was suffered to live in order to be a warning to others of the direful effects of giving way to malignant passions, and as a living monument of the power of a guilty conscience. 'God is not obliged to send a sinner to the place of the damned in order to punish him. He can any where call his name Magor—missabib and render him a terror to himself and all about him.' *Fuller.* To something of this kind the Psalmist probably alludes Ps. 59. 11, 'Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter them by thy power.' Heb. 'make them to wander as fugitives,' as did Cain. The divine forbearance moreover, by thus prolonging his life graciously afforded him space for repentance.

16. *Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.* Heb. 'from before the face of Jehovah.' That is, from the place of God's special presence, from the seat of his worship, from the habitation of his Shekinah, from the society of his father and family, and consequently from the only church which God then had upon earth. It was therefore a virtual excommunication from the highest religious privileges which could then be enjoyed; for the contrary of this, viz. to come into God's presence, or before his face, to dwell in his courts, is spoken of as the chief of all blessings and the object of the most ardent aspirations of his saints, Ps. 96. 8. Ps. 17. 15. If this be the import of the words (and we know of none so probable), it bears a very favourable appearance with respect to the state of things in Adam's family. It implies that the worship of God was there kept up, and that God was with them. Indeed if it were not established there, it appears to have had no existence in the world, which there is no reason to believe was



17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch.

18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael:

q Ps. 49. 11.

ever the case when once it had begun to be observed.—¶ *Dwelt in the land of Nod.* So named from the event, from the circumstance of Cain's dwelling there. *Nod* is the original word for a *vagabond*, and the *land of Nod* is properly the *land of the vagrancy* of the wretched outcast who was condemned to wander up and down in it. The same term is employed by David in Ps. 56. 8, in speaking of his unsettled and wandering life; 'Thou tellest my wanderings (נָדוּי *nodî*).'

17. *And Cain knew his wife.* Although the intermarriage of near kindred was afterwards forbidden and accounted incest, yet in the infancy of the world, this law, from the necessity of the case, must have been dispensed with, and brothers must have taken their sisters to wife. Cain's wife was undoubtedly his sister and married before the death of Abel, for after that event it can scarcely be supposed that any woman would be willing to connect herself with such a miserable fratricide.—¶ *And he built a city.* Heb. 'was building,' i. e. he engaged in and busied himself about this enterprise. He was perhaps prompted to embark in this undertaking partly to divert his mind and prevent it from preying upon itself, and partly to provide for his security against the apprehended violence of other branches of Adam's family. It is no unusual thing for men to attempt to stifle the inward convictions and disquietude of their minds by plunging deep into the busy cares of the world.—¶ *Called the name of the city after*

and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

19 ¶ And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

*the name of his son Enoch.* Perhaps from the consciousness that his own name was odious and infamous. But he would still perpetuate the name of his family in connection with the city which he had founded. The circumstance reminds us of the words of the Psalmist, Ps. 49. 11, 'Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.' Enoch (Heb. Chanoch) means *initiated* or *dedicated*. Why he was so called it is impossible to determine.

18. *Unto Enoch was born Irad, &c.* The names here recited were doubtless those of the first-born, through whom the sacred genealogies are generally reckoned. There is nothing peculiarly worthy of note in respect to the persons composing this line, except the remarkable resemblance of the names to those of the descendants of Seth mentioned in the subsequent chapter—a circumstance for which it is difficult to account. Their ages are not mentioned, and the list is very quickly despatched, as if unworthy of being dwelt upon.

19. *Lamech took unto him two wives.* The first recorded instance of polygamy; a practice which directly contravenes the original ordinance of heaven, that two only should constitute one flesh, and for introducing which Lamech is here condemned to infamous notoriety as long as the sacred narrative shall be read.

20. *The father of such as dwell in tents, &c.* Heb. 'the father of the in-

21 And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the <sup>r</sup> father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and

<sup>r</sup> Rom. 4. 11, 12.

habiter of the tent and cattle.' Chal. 'the master.' The original author, deviser, or founder of any particular craft or calling is termed the *father* of such as follow it. Jabal set the first example of that unsettled, nomadic mode of life which was adopted in after ages by those whose property consisted principally in flocks and herds, and who from residing in tents instead of more permanent habitations could easily transfer themselves from one region to another as the prospect of water or pasturage should chance to invite. In later times the descendants of Ishmael, the wandering Bedouin Arabs, have been peculiarly noted for these roving habits.—¶ *And of such as have cattle.* Gr. 'feeders of cattle.' The literal import of the original is *possession*, from the fact that in the early ages of the world men's principal possessions consisted in flocks and herds. The 'father of such as have cattle' is the title of him who first set the example of keeping and managing cattle, or who followed the shepherd's occupation.

21. *The father of all such as handle the harp and the organ.* Chal. 'The master of all that play on the psaltery and of such as know music.' The Heb. term for *organ* has the import of *loveliness* or *delight*, but upon the precise form and construction, of these instruments we cannot pronounce with much certainty. They are perhaps general terms for all stringed and wind instruments. The *harp* (כִּנּוּר *kinnoor*) of the Hebrews seems to have resembled the modern instrument in its form. It had ten strings, and in 1 Sam. 16. 23,

the sister of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah.

23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

David is expressly described as playing upon it with his hand; but it appears from Josephus that it was also struck or played upon with a plectrum or bow. It seems to have been light and portable, as we find David playing upon it, as he danced before the ark. It was called by the Hebrews, 'the pleasant instrument,' and was not only used in their religious solemnities, but also in their private entertainments and occasions of enjoyment. The *organ* (עוגב *oogab*) certainly could not resemble the modern instrument of that name. It is supposed to have been a kind of flute, composed of one or two, and afterwards of about seven pipes of reeds, of unequal length and thickness, joined together; being nearly identical with the pipe of Pan among the Greeks, or that simple instrument called a 'mouth-organ,' which is still in common use in some countries of Europe.

22. *Tubal-cain.* From this name comes, by very obvious derivation, the Greek *Vulcan* the name of the fabled god of smiths.—¶ *Instructor.* Heb. 'whetter or sharpener;' he whose precepts and example first set the ingenuity of men at work in fabricating the various implements of brass and iron which are so indispensable in the arts of agriculture, architecture, and the different mechanical occupations.

23. *I have slain a man to my wounding, &c.* The Heb. particle rendered 'for' sometimes has a conditional meaning, equivalent to *if, although, supposing that.* It is not unlikely, therefore, that Lamech's words are to be understood, not as relating a matter of fact

24 • If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold.

25 ¶ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, *said she*, hath appointed me an-

t ch. 5. 3.

which had actually happened, but as intimating the consequences of such a fact, provided it should happen. 'Suppose that when designedly and dangerously wounded by a murderous weapon, in the hand of a ruffian, I should slay my assailant, whether a grown man or a daring youth, yet as it would be done in self defence, I should not incur the guilt of murder. For if the man that should have killed Cain, who slew his brother *without provocation*, were to be punished seven-fold, then he who should undertake to inflict vengeance upon me for slaying a man *in my own defence*, shall be punished seventy and seven-fold.' Thus one sinner takes liberty to sin from the suspension of judgment towards another. The speech was prompted, perhaps, by Lamech's having witnessed the mischievous effects of some of his sons' newly-invented instruments of iron and brass, which probably began to be wielded to the injury or destruction of human life. The Chal. renders the passage, 'For I have not killed a man that I should bear sin for him; nor destroyed a young man that my seed should be consumed for him.' The speech is in hemistichs, according to the genius of Hebrew poetry, and, as it seems, not written by Moses, but handed down by tradition.—Thus ends the account of the murderer Cain. We hear no more of his posterity, unless it be as tempters of 'the sons of God,' till they were all swept away by the deluge!

25. *Called his name Seth.* Heb. שֵׁת *set*, put, appointed; a name bestowed

other seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

26 And to Seth, <sup>u</sup> to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men <sup>w</sup> to call upon the name of the LORD.

<sup>u</sup> ch. 5. 6. <sup>w</sup> 1 Kings 18. 24. Ps. 116. 17. Joel 2. 32. Zeph. 3. 9. 1 Cor. 1. 2.

by Eve, but doubtless with Adam's concurrence, implying especially that he was *substituted* for his slain brother. —¶ *Another seed.* Another child; the term *seed* being applied to a single individual, as it is also Gen. 21. 13, and 38. 8. This usage confirms the apostle's argument, Gal. 3. 16, 'He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.' —The manner in which the mother of mankind speaks on this occasion is much in favour of her personal religion. The language implies, that though at first she had doated upon Cain, yet as the brothers grew up, and developed their respective characters, Abel was preferred. He was the child in whom all the hopes of the family seem to have concentrated; and therefore when he fell a sacrifice to his brother's cruelty, it was considered as a very heavy loss. She was not without a son when Seth was born, for Cain was yet alive; but he was considered as none, or as worse than none, and therefore when Seth was born, she hoped to find in him a successor to Abel. And so it proved; for his was doubtless the family in which the true religion was preserved in after ages.

26. *Called his name Enos.* Heb. אֱנוֹשׁ *Enosh*; i. e. sick, weak, sorrowful, miserable; so called perhaps from the prevailing degenerate state of the world at that time. —¶ *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* The true import of these words, as read in the original, is somewhat difficult to be determined. As the Heb.

term for 'began' will admit of being rendered *profaned* or *profanely began*, the Jewish interpreters for the most part understand it of the commencement of idolatry, which consists in profanely calling upon and worshipping idols under the name and titles of the true God, and thus as marking the beginnings of that great degeneracy which finally led to the destruction of the earth and its guilty inhabitants by the flood. Accordingly, the Chaldee Targum reads it, 'Then the sons of men left off from praying in the name of the Lord,' or, 'became profane so that they prayed not.' The more common interpretation, however, is, that about this time there began to be a more marked separation on the part of the pious from the ungodly, that the name of the Lord began to be invoked in a more open and public manner, and the various ceremonies of his worship to be more solemnly observed. Adam and his pious offspring had undoubtedly before this maintained the worship of God both in their families and their closets; but till the human race were considerably multiplied there was no occasion for what may be called *public* worship. But when the families became so numerous that they were obliged to separate, then it was necessary to call them together at stated times and seasons, that, by forming different congregations, they might all receive instruction at once, and keep up in their minds an habitual reverence for God. 'Calling upon the name of the Lord' is an expression elsewhere used to denote all the appropriate acts and exercises of the stated worship of God. Gen. 12. 8.—13. 4.—21. 33. 1 Chron. 16. 8. Ps. 105. 1. et al. Comp. Acts, 9. 14. The marginal rendering, for which there is also some ground, is, 'Then began men to be called by the name of the Lord,' i. e. then began a portion of men (viz. the children of Seth) to be distinguished from others, the descendants of Cain,

by taking upon them the profession of God's holy name, and by being recognised as his true worshippers. A similar phraseology obtains Is. 44. 5, 'One shall say, I am the Lord's and another shall call himself by the name (יְהוָה) of Jacob.' Ch. 48. 1, 'Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel;' i. e. who profess to belong to the people of Israel and to be of the same religion. Perhaps the distinction of 'sons of God' and 'sons of men,' alluded to in the following chapter, then began more generally to prevail. On the whole, however, we incline to the opinion that the sense of *profane invocation* is really conveyed by the original word; but that the other idea also of a *pious profession* of the name and worship of Jehovah is directly and necessarily inferred from it, for the fact of the increasing profaneness and irreligion of one portion of the race would naturally tend to produce a more public and decided adherence to the worship of God by the other, and the Heb. idiom, we believe, allows us to consider both facts to be alluded to by one and the same term.—In respect to this period of the sacred history we may properly cite the words of the celebrated Jewish writer Maimonides as translated by Ainsworth:—'In the days of Enos the sons of Adam erred with great error, and the counsel of the wise men of that age became brutish; and their error was this: They said, forasmuch as God hath created these stars and spheres to govern the world, and set them on high, and imparted honour unto them, and they are ministers that minister before him; it is meet that men should laud, and glorify, and give them honour. For this is the will of God, that we might magnify and honour whomsoever he magnifieth and honoureth, even as a king would have them magnified that stand before him. When this thing was come up into their heart, they be-

## CHAPTER V.

**T**HIS is the <sup>a</sup> book of the generations of Adam: In the day that God created man, in <sup>b</sup> the likeness of God made he him:

2 <sup>c</sup> Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

a 1 Chron. 1. 1. Luke 3. 36. b ch. 1. 26. Eph. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. c ch. 1. 27.

gan to build temples unto the stars, and to offer sacrifices unto them, and to laud and glorify them with words, and to worship before them, that they might, in their evil opinion, obtain favour of the Creator. And this was the root of idolatry.'—Lightfoot supposes that Noah is called in 2 Pet. 2. 5, 'the eighth person' in reference to these times, viz. the eighth in succession from Enos, in whose days the world began to be profane. Otherwise it may be rendered the 'eighth preacher.'

## CHAPTER V.

1. *This is the book of the generations of Adam.* In other words, this is the narrative or rehearsal of the remarkable events pertaining to the creation and the life of Adam (see Gen. 2. 4, on the word 'generations'); and not only so, but also the list or catalogue of the names of his more immediate posterity. Both senses are undoubtedly included in the expression, as the two first verses imply the first, and the remaining part of the chapter the second. The phrase is at once retrospective and anticipative in its import. It is not the writer's object, however, to give a complete genealogy embracing all Adam's descendants to Noah, but only those through whom the line of the promises ran.—¶ *In the day that God created man.* Heb. 'created Adam.' The historian prefaces the ensuing genealogy with a brief recapitulation of the leading events which he had before de-

3 ¶ And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and <sup>d</sup> called his name Seth:

4 <sup>e</sup> And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: 'and he begat sons and daughters:

d ch. 4. 25. e 1 Chron. 1. 1, &c. f ch. 1. 23.

tailed, and which we have already sufficiently explained. Perhaps he designed also to hint at the different mode of production in regard to Adam and his posterity. He came into being from the immediate hand of his Creator; they by generation from him.

2. *Called their name Adam.* As before remarked, ch. 1. 26, Adam is in truth the name of the species, of the whole human race in general, though frequently employed as the appellation of the first man exclusively. It is, however, a striking fact that the Holy Spirit should have adopted a phraseology which teaches us that it was not merely an individual, but the *human race*, whose history is given in the preceding chapters; that it was the *human race* which was put upon probation, was tempted, overcome, and ruined by the fall. It is not easy to conceive of any theological view which shall weaken the force of this solemn consideration.

3. *Adam lived an hundred and thirty years.* During which time he begat many other sons and daughters not enumerated in this catalogue. v. 4. —¶ *Begat a son in his own likeness.* The word 'son' does not occur in the original, but from what follows it is plain that the sense requires its insertion. Similar omissions are not infrequent in Hebrew. Thus 1 Chron. 18. 6, 'Then David put in Syria;' i. e. as we learn from 2 Sam. 8. 6, put *garisons* in Syria.—¶ *In his own like-*



5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; <sup>g</sup> and he died.

6 And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and <sup>h</sup> begat Enos:

7 And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters:

8 And all the days of Seth

g ch. 3. 19. Heb. 9. 27. h ch. 4. 26.

*ness.* Not only like him in the structure of his body and the faculties of his mind, but like him also in the corruption of his nature as a sinner. If the former only had been intended, it might have been said of Cain or Abel, as well as of Seth. But here the implication is, that Seth, though a good man and worthy of being *substituted* in the place of Abel as the progenitor of the promised seed, yet even *he* was begotten and born in sin, and indebted to the sovereign grace of God alone for all the moral excellence which he possessed. The evident drift of the sacred writer is to hint at the contrast between the image in which Adam himself was made, and that in which his children were begotten. Adam was created in the image of God, pure, upright, and holy; but after his fall he begat a son like himself sinful, defiled, frail, mortal, and miserable. 'Grace does not run in the blood, but corruption does. A sinner begets a sinner, but a saint does not beget a saint.' *Henry.*

5. *All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.* Thus our great progenitor, having reached the fifty-sixth year of Lamech's life, and seen his issue in the ninth generation, left the world on which his apostacy had drawn down such dire effects. Besides the griefs which he experienced on account of his personal transgression, he had the mortification to see an early rupture

were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died.

9 ¶ And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:

10 And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:

11 And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years; and he died.

in his family ending in the unnatural murder of his second son by a brother's hand. He was witness also to the beginnings of that universal corruption which at last brought on the deluge; and when he beheld himself the source of these growing evils, he could not fail, with every succeeding year of his life, to entertain deeper and more appalling views of the enormity of his transgression and the justice of his sentence. This would naturally tend in his case, as in every other, to heighten his estimate at once of the goodness and the severity of God, and endear to him that promise which was the hope of a lost world.

3—28. Of the genealogy contained in these verses we may remark, (1.) That it is a very honourable one. Not only did the patriarchs and prophets, and the church of God for many ages, descend from it, but the Son of God himself according to the flesh; and to show the fulfilment of the promises and prophecies concerning him is the principal reason of the genealogy having been recorded. (2.) Neither Cain nor Abel has any place in it. Abel was slain before he had any children, and therefore *could not*; and Cain by his sin had covered his name with infamy, and therefore *should not*. Adam's posterity, consequently, after the lapse of an hundred and thirty years must begin anew. (3.) The extraordinary length of human life at that period was wisely

12 ¶ And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel:

13 And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:

14 And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.

15 ¶ And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared:

16 And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:

17 And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years; and he died.

ordered, not only for peopling the world, but for supplying the defect of a written revelation. From the death of Adam to the call of Abraham, a period of about eleven hundred years, there was living either Enoch, Lamech, Noah, or Shem, besides other cotemporary godly persons, who would feelingly relate to those about them the great events of the creation, the fall, and the recovery of man. (4.) Notwithstanding the longevity of the antediluvians, it is recorded of them all in their turn, that they *died*. Though the stroke of death was slow in its approach, yet it was sure. If man could live a thousand years, yet he must die; and if he die in sin, he will be accursed. (5.) Though many of the names in this genealogy are passed over without any thing being said of their piety, yet we are not hence to infer that they were not so distinguished. Many might be included among them who 'called upon the name of the Lord,' and who are denominated 'the sons of God,' though nothing is personally related of them.—As to the extreme longevity that characterized this period, it was probably owing in part to physical and in part to moral causes. While the influences of climate and diet are to be recognized as contributing to it, yet we may admit that there were various other causes in operation which tended to the same result. There is in fact something in the intellectual nature of man which seems to require that the period of life granted to individuals, should be more extended in the infancy, than in the maturity of

society, and thus the phenomenon is traced back to the goodness and wisdom of the Creator. For it is obvious to the least reflecting, not only that the process of peopling the earth required at first a greater longevity in the human race, than would be necessary after it became adequately colonised, but that the advancement of the race itself into high civilization and refinement could not have taken place, had not each person been permitted to live during a much longer space of time than is found to be the case at present in every portion of the globe. The first generations having no past experience to look back upon, must have owed all their knowledge to their own individual exertions; and how far these would have carried them in the short space of seventy or eighty years, we need only examine the condition of the wandering tribes in America to discover. It was not, however, in accordance with God's gracious design in creating, that man, whom he had appointed the head of this lower world, should live and die in a state of intellectual childhood. And hence he appointed to the antediluvians many centuries of existence, that they might discover, follow up, and lay the foundations of knowledge for all future ages, in every useful and ornamental art. But the necessity for so very protracted an existence being of a temporary nature, God wisely withdrew it, as soon as it had attained its purposes; and he did so, not more in wisdom, than in mercy, to the creature whose mortal life he curtailed. As we

18 ¶ And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat <sup>1</sup> Enoch :

19 And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters :

20 And all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty and two years ; and he died.

<sup>1</sup> Jude 14, 15.

have already seen, though their prodigious age doubtless contributed greatly to the advancement of the antediluvians in knowledge and refinement, it is beyond a question that the same circumstances tended, more perhaps than any thing besides, to introduce moral corruption into the world, which corruption became, in all probability, more and more flagrant as the increased ingenuity of mankind enabled them to devise new methods of gratifying the senses. Thus God permitted the first races to live long upon the earth, that they might themselves attain to perfection in the cultivation of the sciences, and leave them to their posterity, even though the boon of longevity proved mischievous to their own moral purity, whilst the groundwork of knowledge being laid, he took away the stumbling-block in the way of man's obedience, by decreeing that 'the time of man's life should be four score years.'

21. *And begat Methuselah.* The import of this name in the original is, 'He dieth, and the sending forth;' as if it were an intimation of the sending forth of the waters of the deluge about the time of his death. Whether this conjecture be well founded or not, it is certain that in the very year in which he died the earth was overwhelmed by that dread catastrophe.—The age of Methuselah transcended that of any of the rest of the patriarchs here mentioned, but it is not absolutely certain that he

21 ¶ And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah :

22 And Enoch <sup>1</sup> walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters :

k ch. 6. 9. & 17. 1. & 24. 46. 2 Kings 20. 3. Ps. 16. 8. & 116. 9. & 128. 1. Mic. 6. 8. Mal. 2. 6.

was the longest liver of the children of Adam. Among the multitudes of whom no information is given some might have exceeded him in this respect.

22. *Enoch walked with God.* A brief but expressive character of a good man. To walk with God is in the first place to be *agreed* with him, to become *reconciled* to him in the way of his appointment—'for how can two walk together except they be agreed?'—and then to set God always before us, to act as being under the continual inspection of his all-seeing eye. It is to live a life of communion with him and of obedience to him, making his word our rule and his glory our end, in all actions. It is to make it our constant endeavour in every thing to please him and in nothing to offend him. This it is to walk with God like Enoch, who in the midst of the men of a wicked generation walked not as they walked, but set his face as a flint against the abounding ungodliness. In consequence of this he obtained the honourable and precious testimony 'that he pleased God,' and as a reward for his preeminent piety was spared the pains of death.—From the import of the phrase 'to walk with God' as used 1 Sam. 2. 30, 35, and from his being said by Jude, v. 14, to be a *prophet*, it is probably to be inferred that Enoch acted also in a public and official capacity as a preacher of righteousness, reproving and denouncing the growing impiety of the times, and exhorting to repentance. **A**

23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

24 And <sup>1</sup>Enoch walked with God, and he *was* not: for God took him.

25 ¶ And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech:

1 2 Kings 2. 11. Heb. 11. 5.

brief but impressive specimen of his preaching is preserved by the apostle Jude, from which it appears that the doctrine of the second advent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and a judgment to come, were taught, though somewhat obscurely, in the very earliest ages of the world.—Wonderful as was the event of the translation of a living man to the world of glory, we know of nothing in the revealed purposes of God to forbid the occurrence of other instances of the like kind even in this or any other age of the world, provided there were instances of equal eminence in piety. The same distinction was subsequently conferred upon Elijah, and probably from the same reasons, and the words of the apostle 1 Cor. 15. 51, make it certain that the whole human race shall not fall asleep in death, but that a portion of mankind shall be transferred to the abodes of bliss without undergoing dissolution. This is to take place under the seventh apocalyptic trumpet, and if there be any certainty in prophetic chronology we are now living under that trumpet, or close upon its borders. If then such an event is to be anticipated hereafter, and that without contravening the *general* law, that 'it is appointed for all men once to die,' we know no reason why it *may* not take place even now, though we have no positive evidence that it will.—It may be remarked that Enoch was cotemporary with Adam 308 years—with his son Methuselah

26 And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:

27 And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years; and he died.

28 ¶ And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:

300 years—with Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Jared during his whole life—and that he was translated 57 years after the death of Adam, 69 years before the birth of Noah, and in the year of the world 987. It has been suggested as highly probable that some visible demonstration of his translation was given to his cotemporaries in order to confirm their faith in the prospect of another and an immortal life, as well perhaps as to intimate to them the manner in which sinless man would in process of time have been disposed of under the first covenant, had it not been for the effects of the fall. But from the peculiar phraseology in which his removal is described, v. 24, we incline to the opinion that it was not visible.—¶ *Begat sons and daughters.* From which it plainly appears that a state of celibacy is not essential to a life of the most devoted and preeminent piety.

24. *And he was not, for God took him.* Was not found; was missing; had disappeared from human view. The expression implies something very peculiar in the manner of his removal. In some mysterious way he had become no longer an inhabitant of this world, and as he is not said like the rest of the patriarchs to have *died*, the inference is plain, though the text itself does not clearly assert it, that he must have been exempted from the common lot of humanity in making his exit from the earth. This is made absolutely cer-

29 And he called his name Noah, saying, This *same* shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground <sup>m</sup> which the LORD hath cursed.

m ch. 3. 17. & 4. 11.

tain by the inspired declaration, Heb. 11. 5, that 'by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.' The Chaldee version renders the passage, 'He appeared not, and yet the Lord killed him not.'

29. *Called his name Noah, saying, &c.* The original terms for *Noah* (נֹחַ *noach*, *rest*) and *comfort* (נַחַם *nahham*, *to comfort or refresh*) have so much resemblance to each other that we are probably to regard the language as an instance of that paranomasia, or play upon words, which is of such frequent occurrence in the sacred writers, and of which a striking parallel is to be noted Gen. 9. 27. The name was doubtless bestowed by the prompting of the spirit of prophecy. But in what precise sense the prediction was to be fulfilled in Noah, is a point not very easily determined. The opinion of Bp. Sherlock is that the curse upon the earth inflicted in consequence of Adam's sin had, in connection with the progressive increase of corruption and crime, been growing more and more severe ever since the fall, so that the work and toil necessary to raise from the ground a sufficient sustenance for life had become an almost intolerable burden. And he supposes that the words of Lamech refer to a general expectation that by the intervention or instrumentality of some distinguished personage the rigour of the curse was to be greatly abated, and the earth restored in a measure to its primitive fertility and ease of cultivation. This personage he conceives that Lamech, under divine suggestion, recognised in his new-born child, and bestowed upon him a name in ac-

30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters :

31 And all the days of Lamech

cordance with the fact. The prediction thus understood he maintains has been verified by the event; that the earth from the time of the flood was in a good degree restored from the curse laid upon it at the fall, and is still enjoying the effect of the blessing bestowed upon Noah. Very specious objections may doubtless be urged against this view of the subject, yet if the prediction be construed as announcing a *gradual amelioration* of the state of the earth to be effected through this lapse of many ages, the proposed interpretation may be considered as less liable to exception. For it is certain that the invention of the arts and implements of husbandry, and the improvements made by one age upon another in every department of agriculture, have rendered the toil and work of men's hands less and less burdensome. By the art of taming and managing the beasts of the field, and pressing them into our service—a prerogative especially secured in the grant made through Noah, chap. 9. 2—the most laborious part of the work is transferred upon them, and by that means man's dominion over them so far recovered. By the improvements also which in later times have resulted from an investigation of the laws of motion and a dexterous application of the mechanical powers, one man can now perform with ease what formerly surpassed the united efforts of many, and a great part of the labour of life has been thrown back upon inanimate matter itself. In attributing such an import, however, to the name *Noah*, we are not to conceive of him as the *efficient agent* by whom such a signal



were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.

32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat ° Shem, Ham, ° and Japheth.

n ch. 6. 10. o ch. 10. 21.

change was to be brought about, but merely as a *destined medium*, appointed to act a conspicuous part in the train of events which should issue in such a result.—After all, the above suggestions are thrown out in the lack of any thing more satisfactory in explanation of the reason assigned by Lamech for the bestowment of the name *Noah* upon his son.

32. *And Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.* That is, began to beget; for his three sons were not all begotten or born in one year. Of these, Japheth was undoubtedly the eldest, and therefore born in the five hundredth year of Noah's life. And as Shem begat Arphaxad two years after the flood when he was one hundred years old, ch. 11. 10, he must have been born about two years after Japheth, that is to say, when his father was five hundred and two. Yet as Ham is invariably named between the other two, we incline to the belief that he was born between them, though of the precise time of his birth we are not informed. Shem is named first from his superior dignity as the progenitor of the church and of Christ, and perhaps from his obtaining the birthright, though this is not mentioned in the history. In like manner, Abel is named before Cain, Jacob before Esau, and Isaac before Ishmael. He is called *Shem*, which signifies *a name*, because the name of God and the *distinction* that accrued from it, was always to remain in his posterity till He should come out of his loins whose name was to be above every name; so in putting Shem first, Christ was in effect put first, who in all things must have the preeminence.

## CHAPTER VI.

AND it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

a ch. 1. 28.

## CHAPTER VI.

1. *And it came to pass, &c.* A more exact rendering of the two first verses is the following;—'And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, *that* daughters were born unto them, *And* the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair,' &c. The same construction in the original occurs 1 Sam. 13. 22. Josh. 17. 13. 2 Kings. 3. 5, in all which cases 'and' is rendered 'that.'—¶ *When men began to multiply.* Men had multiplied long before this, for it was now above 1500 years since the creation; the meaning therefore is, *when the human race had greatly multiplied.* Heb. 'when the Adam began to multiply.' That is, corrupt men, men partaking in an eminent degree of the nature of fallen Adam, in allusion particularly to the descendants of wicked Cain. This appears from their being distinguished from the 'sons of God' in the ensuing verse, who although by nature equally the heirs of corruption, yet being descended from the line of Seth were in the main a class of persons possessing the fear and observing the worship of Jehovah. They were those upon whom 'the name of the Lord was called,' as mentioned in the previous chapter. The object of the sacred writer is to trace back to its fountain-head that universal degeneracy and corruption of manners which resulted in bringing the deluge upon the world of the ungodly. From his statement it is plain that it commenced in promiscuous intermarriages, or less lawful connections, between the seed of the righteous and of the wicked. 'If there had not been so deep a deluge of

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they <sup>b</sup> took them wives of all which they chose.

b Deut. 7. 3, 4.

sin there had been none of the waters. From whence then was this superfluity of iniquity? Whence, but from the unequal yoke with infidels. These marriages did not beget men so much as wickedness; from hence religious husbands both lost their piety, and gained a rebellious and godless generation.' *Bp. Hall.*

2. *The sons of God.* Heb. בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים *sons of the Elohim.* Chal. 'sons of the eminent ones.' That is, the descendants of Seth, Enos, and the other pious patriarchs who were separated from the posterity of Cain and formed the visible church. The appellation no doubt has reference to Gen. 4. 26, where the same class of persons are said to be 'called by the name of the Lord;' i. e. to be the sons and servants of God in contradistinction from others, the seed of Cain, who are merely called 'men.' The term Elohim is occasionally applied to persons of distinguished eminence in place or power, such as judges, magistrates, &c. but is here probably used to denote a distinction of a *moral* kind, such as resulted from their likeness to God, their maintaining his worship, and obeying his laws. The persons designated included, it may be presumed, all, or nearly all, those enumerated in the preceding chapter as forming the line of the faithful from Seth to Noah, who though pious and devout themselves, were yet unfortunate in their children. *They* unhappily swerved from the precepts in which they had been trained, forsook the counsels of their fathers, relaxed the strictness of their walk, and, yielding gradually to temptation, formed unhal- lowed connections with the worldly and profane, and thus opened the floodgates of a universal corruption of morals.

—¶ *Saw the daughters of men.* Re-

garded with a lustful eye, as Eve *saw* the forbidden fruit. Heb. 'daughters of the Adam.' That is, daughters of the profane and impious race of Cain, children of the old Adam, such as had nothing in them but the nature of *men*, fallen men, who had lost the image of God and minded only earthly things. Thus, 1 Cor. 13. 3, 'Walk ye not as *men*?' i. e. as carnal unregenerate men. —¶ *They took them wives of all which they chose.* Or, Heb. 'which they liked or loved.' The original for 'choose' often has the sense of *liking, delighting in, being pleased with.* Thus Isa. 14. 1, 'For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet *choose* Israel;' i. e. will yet delight in. So the phrase 'my chosen,' Isa. 42. 1, is interpreted 'my beloved,' Mat. 12. 18. Comp. Zech. 1. 17.—3. 2. Prov. 1. 29.—3. 31. En- snared by the beauty of these fair daughters of men, and overlooking every higher consideration, they rushed thoughtlessly into the most dangerous connections. Instead of giving reason time to deliberate and weigh the consequences, they surrendered themselves to the impulses of a headstrong passion, and deaf to advice or remon- strance *took all that they chose*, choos- ing only by the eye and in obedience to their corrupt affections; and perhaps disdaining to govern themselves by the limitation of one woman to one man. Such unequal yokings have always been among the most fruitful sources of evil, and upon no conduct of his people is the stamp of the divine displeasure more unequivocally set than upon this. See Deut. 7. 3, 4, 2 Cor. 6. 14. 1 Cor. 7. 39. Professors of religion in marry- ing both themselves and their children should, as a general rule, make con- science of keeping within the bounds of profession. 'The bad will sooner

3 And the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with

man,<sup>d</sup> for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

e Gal. 5. 16, 17. 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20.

d Ps. 78. 39.

corrupt the good than the good reform the bad. Those that profess themselves the children of God should not marry without his consent, which they have not if they join in affinity with his enemies.' *Henry.*

3. *The Lord said*; i. e. to himself, purposed, resolved.—*¶ My Spirit shall not always strive with man.* Heb. לֹא יִדְּוֹן shall not judge, i. e. contend in judgment, as the word signifies Eccl. 6. 10, 'Neither may he contend (דָּוֹן) with him that is mightier than he.' As if he should say, 'My Spirit shall not perpetually keep up the process of judgment, rebuke, conviction, and condemnation.' The ancient versions vary considerably in their mode of rendering. The Gr. translates it, 'My Spirit shall not continue in these men.' Chal. 'This evil generation shall not continue before me for ever, because they are flesh, and their works most wicked; and an end shall be given unto them, an hundred and twenty years, if perhaps they may be converted.' The Septuagint translators appear to have taken the original יָדֹוֹן *yadon* as a verbal derivation from the noun נֶדֶן *neden*, a sheath; so that the true sense will be, 'My Spirit shall not for ever be en-sheathed in man;' that is, The vital breath with which I inspired him shall not for ever animate its sheath of clay. This phraseology is somewhat strikingly illustrated by the following lines from a Persian historian said to have been spoken by a philosopher to Alexander the Great.

Dost thou not know that man's exterior form  
Is but the scabbard to the enlivening mind?  
Why shouldst thou judge then of the weapon's edge

When yet you've nothing seen except the case?—*Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol v. p. 438.

This acceptance of the original word, however is not sustained by adequate authority, though adopted by Pagninus and favoured by Grotius. The rendering which we have given above is by far the most probable, implying that the spirit of God speaking by the ministry of such prophets as Enoch and Noah, as well as by his inward operations on the conscience, should not always strive to bring men to repentance. A parallel mode of speech we find Neh. 9. 30, 'Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear.' The language plainly implies that ample time and opportunity had been already afforded for this purpose, 'the long-suffering of God had waited,' but all to no effect, and now an end is determined to the divine forbearance. Still, as the justice of heaven is reluctant to take its course, it shall not be immediately executed; a limited respite is granted, which, once expired, no farther indulgence shall be shewn.

'There is a time, and Justice marks the date;  
For long-forbearing Clemency to wait;  
That hour elapsed, th' incurable revolt  
Is punished, and down comes the thunder-bolt.'—*Cowper.*

This passage should be viewed in connection with 1 Pet. 3. 18—20, from which we learn that it was no other than the *Spirit of Christ* that through the instrumentality of the pious patriarchs preached to the disobedient spirits of the old world. We may be reminded by the narrative (1.) That nothing more effectually grieves the Spirit of God than fleshly lusts. (2.) Every fresh indulgence of sin is a new resistance against God's strivings. (3.) When

4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of

men, and they bare *children* to them: the same *became* mighty men, which *were* of old, men of renown.

the Spirit of God is resisted, his calls become less and less sensible, till he is finally quite withdrawn. (4.) When God strives no more, then men rush headlong into sin and ruin. How much reason have we all to pray, 'Lord, take not thine Holy Spirit from us.'—

¶ *For that he also is flesh.* Chal. 'for that they are flesh, and their works evil.' Had the sons of God kept themselves separate, and preserved their purity, God would have spared the world for their sakes, but they mingled together, and became in effect one people. God, therefore, seeing they had become virtually one, called them all by one name, and that is *man* (אדם *Adam*), without distinction, and in giving the reason why his Spirit should not always strive with man, special reference is had to their having become degenerate. It was 'for that *he also*, or *these also*, were flesh'; i. e. even his own professing people, those who had been denominated and deemed the 'sons of God,' *even they* too had become fleshly, corrupt, profligate. The original is peculiarly emphatic, as if such a result would not have been to be wondered at in regard to the Cainites, but that it was matter of astonishment and regret that the pious stock of Seth should have thus greivously apostatised; but seeing that they had in fact joined themselves to the opposite party and become the promoters of the general iniquity, they must expect nothing else than to share in the bitter consequences. Men are worse than others just in proportion as they ought to be better, and are dealt with accordingly.—¶ *Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.* The allotted term for repentance before the day of vengeance should

come. God will so temper his judgments with mercy, and afford the sinner such warnings and such opportunities of securing his favour, that the judgment when it comes shall find him without excuse. Let us hear then, and fear, and break off our sins by righteousness.

4. *There were giants in the earth in those days.* A term descriptive probably not so much of great strength and stature as of great cruelty, rapine, and violence; though the first, as a secondary sense, may still be included. Heb. נפילים *nephilim*, *fallers*, i. e. *apostates fallen* from God and the true religion, and by violence and cruelty *falling upon* their fellow-men, injuring their persons, and invading their rights; usurpers, oppressors, tyrants, monsters of wickedness and lust, as well as of enormous stature. They are otherwise and elsewhere termed *Anakim*, *Rephaim*, *Gibborim*: thus Nimrod, Gen. 10. 8, is called *Gibbor*; i. e. *a mighty one, a giant*. By the Greeks, this class of men are termed *Gigantes*, from two words, signifying *to be born of the earth*; a term from which we learn both the origin and the import of the English word 'giant.' The giants of the ancient mythology are fabled to have sprung from the earth, from some broken traditions respecting these antediluvian apostates, who in the sense of being earthly, sensual, vile, despising heavenly things, might be justly denominated 'earth-born.' There are more frequent allusions to them in the original Scriptures than are obvious in our translation, or any other. Thus, Prov. 9. 18, speaking of the young man enticed into the abodes of the adulterous woman, 'He knoweth not that

5 ¶ And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every <sup>e</sup> imagi-

e ch. 8. 21. Deut. 29. 19. Prov. 6. 18. Matt. 15. 19.

*the dead* (Heb. the giants, the Reph-aim) are there;' i. e. he does not consider that it was by this sin that the renowned rebels before the flood perished, and that he is in danger of meeting the same fate. Prov. 21. 16, 'He that wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of *the dead*,' (Heb. of the giants;) i. e. shall be in imminent peril of being joined to that wretched society. Prov. 2. 18, 'The house of the strange woman inclineth *unto death*,' (Heb. unto the giants.) Again, Job 26. 5, 'Dead things, (Heb. the giants, Rephaim,) are formed under the waters and the inhabitants thereof.' This conveys no intelligible meaning. It is probably more correctly rendered by the Lat. Vulgate, 'The giants groan (Heb. shake, or tremble) under the waters with the inhabitants thereof.' The clew to this is to be found in the fact, that it was this class of men, who were buried in the waters of the deluge, and whose spirits, i. e. shades, *manes*, were supposed, in popular estimation, to be imprisoned in the caverns of the earth. It was to these spirits that Christ, by his Holy Spirit, preached during their lifetime, 1 Pet. 3. 19. Farmer supposes that the Apostle James, in saying, 'The devils (Gr. demons, i. e. *spirits of dead men*) believe and tremble,' alludes to this very passage of Job. The conceit of the Grecian poets, that earthquakes were occasioned by the attempts of the giants to shake off the mountains that were heaped upon them, owes its origin to the same source, viz. the traditions respecting the fate of the antediluvian rebels, who after death were held to be incarcerated for their crimes in the subterranean regions of the earth. It is supposed by some that no other than

nation of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

these apostate 'sons of God' are intended by the sacred writer in the term 'angels,' 2 Pet. 5. 4, who are often styled 'Elohim.'—¶ And also after that when, &c. Heb. 'And even after it was so that the sons of God went in,' &c. This implies that the result of such marriages disappointed previous expectation; that although the 'sons of God' might have flattered themselves with the idea of exerting a predominant influence of a religious kind upon their wives, and of begetting and rearing up a godly seed, yet the experiment was unsuccessful. The children when grown emulated not the virtues of their fathers but the vices of their mothers, and thus the race of *giants* was perpetuated.—¶ The same became *mighty men*, which were of *old*, *men of renown*. Heb. גִּבּוֹרִים *Gibborim* and אֲנָשֵׁי שֵׁם *anshe shem*, *men of name*. The contrary phrase occurs Job 30. 8, 'base men.' Heb. 'men of no name.' The words denote a class of men who had made themselves famous with after ages by their exploits, by their deeds of violence, robbery, and wrong. With this repute had their characters been handed down to posterity. If we are not mistaken, the passage conveys an intimation that these antediluvian giants and heroes were the principal personages of the ancient heathen mythology, celebrated by the poets. However this may be, they were men that became renowned in popular estimation for their deeds of prowess, oppression, and blood, and it is but little to the credit of humanity that such characters have been the principal themes of historic record and worldly admiration in all ages.

5. God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth. Every thing in the narrative is so framed as



6 And 'it repented the LORD that he had made man on the

f See Num. 23. 19. 1 Sam. 15. 11, 29. 2 Sam. 24. 16. Mal. 3. 6. Jam. 1. 17.

to vindicate the judgment of God in the fearful proceeding soon to be detailed. The drift of these words is evidently to show, that it was not from a slight cause or a hasty impulse that the destruction of a world was determined upon. As the result of a deliberate survey, and not of a superficial glance, God saw that the earth had become replete with wickedness, and therefore ripe for a curse. Had the sins of men been of the mere ordinary stamp, or had they been local and limited in their prevalence, they might have been pardoned; but as it was, they were at once enormous in degree and universal in extent. What more could be necessary to justify the extremest rigour in the sentence of the Judge?—¶ *And that every imagination, &c.* Heb. כל יצר *the whole fabrication or formation.* The term is that which is usually applied to the work of the potter. The language of Paul, Heb. 4. 13, is probably equivalent; 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight.' Gr. κτισις *creation, formation*, i. e. of the heart. The church being thus corrupted and in a manner lost to the world, there was nothing left to resist the torrent of depravity. This, it would appear from the picture here drawn, had now attained its highest pitch. The words, we apprehend, are not to be understood as originally descriptive of the general state of the human heart, though in this view but little abatement is to be made from the assertion, but of the race of men then living; and the sense is, that the wickedness of men had become so great in the earth that the very intents, and thoughts, and purposes of the heart were only evil continually. But the portrait, though appalling, is doubtless no more than just.

earth, and it 'grieved him at his heart.

g Isa. 63. 10. Eph. 4. 30.

Had it been drawn by the pen of a prejudiced erring mortal it might have been supposed to exceed the truth. But this is not the testimony of man, but of God who sees things precisely as they are, and his infallible declaration is, that the thoughts of man were evil without exception, without mixture, and without intermission.

6. *It repented the Lord.* As it is said 1 Sam. 15. 29, 'The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent;' it is obvious that we are not to ascribe to an immutable mind the fickleness that belongs to man, nor to suppose that the omniscient Jehovah was really disappointed. This and similar expressions are taken from what passes among men when they are disappointed in their expectations and endeavours. As a potter finding that a vessel which he has formed with the utmost care does not answer the desired purpose, regrets his labour, and casts out of his sight the worthless object, so God, making use of language accommodated to our feeble apprehensions, represents himself as *repenting* and being grieved at heart that he had bestowed upon man so much labour in vain. As a general rule, wherever 'repenting' is attributed to God, it implies not a real inward change in his feelings and purposes, but simply a change in his dispensations towards his creatures, in view of some previous change in their conduct towards him. Thus it is said 1 Sam. 15. 10, 11, 'Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he hath turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.' Here the effect follows the cause. 'Repentance

7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air;

for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But <sup>h</sup> Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 18. 19. Exod. 33. 12, 13, 16, 17. Luke, 1. 30. Acts, 7. 46.

with man,' says an old divine, 'is the *changing of the will*; repentance with God the *willing of a change*.' In this case the *very same principles* which would lead him to reward and bless the obedient, would lead him also to punish the perverse and rebellious. The words before us express, with an energy and impressiveness which probably nothing purely literal could have conveyed, the exceeding sinfulness and provoking nature of sin.

impressive to Israel, 'his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had,' were brought forth and stoned and burnt with him.

8. *Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.* That is, obtained favour. Chal. 'found mercy before the Lord.' In the worst of times there are still some who find favour in the sight of God, who stand up as witnesses for him in the midst of their generations, and upon whom his eye is set for good. As *grace* in the Scriptures is uniformly opposed to *works* and to *debt*, Rom. 11. 6.—4. 4, the *imparted* and *distinguishing* favour of God must be recognized as the primary ground of Noah's acceptance. Yet this truth is not to be held to the disparagement of his own free, active, and exemplary obedience in the discharge of every duty. Upon the character of Noah here given we may observe, that while it is painful to find *but one* family, nay, it would seem but one person, out of all the professed sons of God, who stood firm in this evil day, yet it is pleasant to find *one* upright man in a generation of the ungodly, whose conduct would shine the brighter when contrasted with that of the world about him. It is a great matter to be faithful among the faithless. With all our helps from the society of good men, we find it sufficiently difficult to keep on our way; but for an individual to set his face against the whole current of public opinion and custom, requires and implies great grace. Yet that is the only true religion which walks as in the sight of God, irrespective of what is thought or done

7. *And the Lord said.* Purposed within himself.—¶ *I will destroy.* Heb. אֶמַחַח *I will blot or wipe out.* The same term occurs 2 Kings, 21. 13, 'And I will *wipe* (מִחֵיהֶם) Jerusalem as a man *wipeth* (יִמַחֵה) a dish, *wiping it* (מִחֵה) and turning it upside down.' How strikingly does this set forth the aggravation of sin, that it should be represented as extinguishing the paternal kindness of God towards his creature, and causing him to say as on another occasion, Is. 27. 11, 'It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that *made them* will not have mercy on them, and he that *formed them* will show them no favour.' Those who do not answer the end for which they were created, justly forfeit the existence which they abuse.—¶ *Both man and beast.* Heb. 'from man unto beast;' i. e. beginning with man I will extend the destruction unto beasts. As the animal tribes were made for man's use and as a kind of *appendage* to him, they are to be involved in his calamities. Man's sin brings ruin upon his comforts as well as upon himself. Thus when Achan had transgressed, Josh. 7. 24, in order to render his punishment more

9 ¶ These *are* the generations of Noah: <sup>1</sup> Noah was a just man, *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah <sup>2</sup> walked with God.

i ch 7. 1. Ezek. 14 14, 20.

k ch. 5. 22

by others. It is, moreover, encouraging to find that one upright man was singled out from the rest when the world was to be destroyed. If he had perished with the world, God could indeed have taken him to himself, and all would have been well with *him*; but then there would have been no public expression of what he loved, as well as of what he hated.

\*\*\* At this place, ver. 8, ends, in the Hebr. Scriptures, the first *Parashâ*, or great section of the Law, i. e. the portion appointed to be read on the Sabbath in the Jewish synagogues, Acts, 15. 21. The five books of Moses were divided by the Jews into fifty-four sections, because, in their intercalated years, by a month being added, there were fifty-four Sabbaths; but in other years they reduced them to fifty-two by joining two together. Thus the reading of the whole Law was completed in the course of a year. In the time of the Maccabees, who restored the reading of the Law after it had been suspended by the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, a corresponding number of sections from the Prophets were read in connection, the Law forming the first lesson, and the Prophets the second. This was practised in the times of the Apostles, as may be seen Acts, 13. 15. Of this usage the Hebrew doctors write, 'It is a common custom throughout all Israel that they finish wholly the Law in one year; beginning on the Sabbath which is after the Feast of Tabernacles at the first section of Genesis, (thence called 'Bereshith;') on the second Sabbath at 'These are the generations of Noah,' ch. 6. 9; on the third, at 'The Lord said unto Abraham, ch. 12. 1; so they read and go on in this order till they have ended the Law at the Feast of Tabernacles.'

9. *The generations of Noah.* That is, the matters of record relating to him, the character he sustained and the events which happened to him. See on Gen. 37. 2.—¶ *A just man and perfect in his generations.* That is, upright and sincere among the men of the age in which he lived, the original word for 'generations' being different from that (הַדּוֹרֹת) in the preceding clause. Whether this character of Noah is introduced here as the *reason* or the *effect* of the divine favour towards him it is not easy to determine; but however it may be, it is a most honorary testimonial to his worth. He is the first man whom the Scriptures *call* just, though doubtless not the first who *was* so. In a legal sense, a *just* man is one that doeth good and sinneth not; but since the fall no such man has existed upon earth, save the man Christ Jesus. If any man is now so denominated it is in the sense in which the Scriptures use the term when they represent the just as living by faith. Such was the life of Noah, as it is expressly said of him, Heb. 11. 7, that he 'became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith;' and the faith by which he was justified before God operated, as it always will, to render him just before men. But he was not only *just* or *righteous*, he was also *perfect in his generations* (Heb. תָּמִים *tamim*) i. e. not perfect in the sense of sinless, but sincere, simple, upright, having respect to *all* God's commandments, and like Caleb following the Lord *fully*. Christian perfection is not absolute freedom from sin, but evangelical integrity; a perfection implying completeness of *parts* rather than of *degrees*, in the renewed character; and it may be better understood by viewing it as opposed to *partiality* and *hypocrisy*, to a *partial* obedience and an in-

10 And Noah begat three sons,  
1 Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 The earth also was corrupt  
before God; and the earth was  
filled with violence.

1 ch. 5. 32. m ch. 7. 1. & 10. 9. & 13. 13. 2  
Chron. 34. 27. Luke, 1. 6. Rom. 2. 13. & 3. 19.  
Ezek. 8. 17. & 28. 16. Hab. 2. 8, 17.

*sincere* profession. As the term is so frequently applied to different individuals in the Old Testament and the possession of the character so frequently enjoined in the New, there can be no doubt that *perfection*, in the scriptural sense of the term, is actually attainable, and ought to be an object of more anxious solicitude among Christians than it usually is.—¶ *Walked with God.* The same that is said of Enoch; implying his being reconciled to God, his acknowledging him in all his ways, and enjoying habitual communion with him.

11. *The earth also was corrupt before God.* Heb. 'and the earth was corrupt.' The word 'also' is not felicitously introduced in this place into our translation. It usually implies something *supplemental* to what has been before said and closely connected with it, but the preceding context does not well allow such a sense here, and the probability is, it was employed to prevent the twofold occurrence of 'and' in the same sentence. The literal rendering, though lacking in euphony, would have been better.—By the first 'earth' is undoubtedly meant *the inhabitants of the earth*, and by the 'corruption' charged upon them is intended a *moral degeneracy*, though the word is frequently employed in the sense of *physical destruction or wasting*. It is especially applied to that kind of *corrupting* or *depraving* the worship of God which consists in introducing *idolatry*, as in Ex. 32. 7. Deut. 32. 5. Judg. 2. 19; and 'the people's doing corruptly,' 2 Chron. 27. 2, is elsewhere explained, 2 Kings, 15, 35, by their '*sacrificing*

12 And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

o ch. 18. 21. Ps. 14. 2. & 33. 13, 14. & 53. 2, 3.

and *burning incense* in the high places.' This flagrant wickedness was perpetrated 'before God,' i. e. openly, publicly, without disguise, to his very face, as it were. Gen. 10. 9.—17. 1. —¶ *Was filled with violence.* Heb. 'violent wrong.' Chal. 'rapines, or robberies;' i. e. injurious and cruel dealing towards men; whereas the 'corruption' mentioned above denotes the corruption of religion or wickedness towards God. Or, by a common idiom in the Heb. 'violence' may here be put for 'violent men.' Thus, Prov. 13. 6, 'Wickedness overthroweth the sinner (Heb. הַסַּיִת the sin).' 2 Kings, 24. 14, 'None remained save the poorest sort (Heb. דָּלִי the poverty) of the land.' Jer. 50. 31, 'Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud (Heb. זָדוֹן O pride).' The degeneracy, therefore, which had commenced in the *domestic*, gradually extended itself to the *civil*, and finally to the *religious*, state of the world. The springs of domestic and social life being poisoned, the tender ties of blood and affinity violated, quarrels, intrigues, oppressions, robberies, and murders pervaded the abodes of men. The fear of God and a due regard to our fellow-men are closely connected; and where the one is given up, the other will soon follow. Indeed it appears to be the fixed decree of the God of providence, that when men have cast off his fear they shall not long continue in amity one with another. He has only to let the laws of nature take their course, and the effect will surely follow.

12. *God looked upon the earth.* The universal violence and corruption which overspread the earth, attracted the no-

13 And God said unto Noah, <sup>p</sup> The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: <sup>a</sup> and

<sup>p</sup> Jer. 51. 13. Ezek. 7. 2, 3, 6. Amos, 8. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 7. <sup>a</sup> q ver. 17.

tice of heaven. God knows at all times what is doing in our world, but his *looking* upon the earth denotes a special observance of it, as though he had instituted an inquiry into its real condition. Ps. 33. 13.—¶ *All flesh had corrupted its way.* All mankind; called 'flesh' from their frailty, Is. 40. 5, 6, but more especially from the corruption and carnality of their unregenerate state. Gen. 6. 3. By their 'way' is meant not only their *religion* or *faith*, Acts, 18. 25, 26—22. 4. 2 Pet. 2. 2, but also their *manners, conduct, course of life*. Thus the 'way of Cain' Jude, 11, is used for *maliciousness*, the 'way of Balaam' for *covetousness*, 2 Pet. 2. 15, and so in other cases. In allusion probably to this language it is said in Job, ch. 22. 15, 16, 'Hast thou marked the *old way* which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood?' i. e. with the waters of the general deluge. Compare Luke, 17. 27.

13. *The end of all flesh is come before me.* A twofold import seems to be couched in these words; first, that the end, that is, the completion, the fullness, the consummation of all *fleshliness*, had come before God. In other words, human corruption had reached its utmost height. Viewed in this light the ensuing words are exegetical of the first clause, and this is favoured by the fact that the original word for 'end' (Heb. קץ) is frequently so used in the Scriptures, as well as the Gr. τέλος by which it is translated. Thus Jer. 51. 13, 'Thine *end* is come, (even) the measure of thy covetousness,' i. e. thou hast reached the utmost summit of thy de-

behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14 ¶ Make thee an ark of gopher-wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

sires. Eccl. 12. 13, 'Let us hear the *conclusion* קץ of the whole matter;' i. e. the summing up, the substance. Rom. 10. 4, 'Christ is the *end* of the law for righteousness;' i. e. the perfection, the consummation, of the law. So often elsewhere. In such cases, however, the subordinate idea of *time* or *termination of time* is often, perhaps usually, involved; and from this arises the second and more generally received sense of this passage, viz. that the decreed end of all men (excepting Noah) had come before God; the allotted term of 120 years was now upon the point of expiring, and the universal depravity was to be visited with condign punishment. Comp. Ezek. 7. 2—6. Amos, 8. 2.—¶ *I will destroy them.* Heb. מַשְׁחִיתָ am corrupting i. e. about to corrupt or destroy. The present participle both in Heb. and Gr. has often a future import. In the former verse, 'corrupt' had the sense of *corrupting by sin*; here, that of *corrupting by punishment*, or in other words, *of destroying*. A parallel distinction occurs, Rev. 11. 8, 'That thou shouldst *destroy* them that *destroy* the earth;' Gr. 'That thou shouldst *corrupt* them that *corrupt* the earth.'—¶ *With the earth.* Or Heb. 'even the earth;' thus identifying 'the earth' with its inhabitants, according to a common idiom of the Scriptures, and giving us a clew to the real meaning of the word 'earth' in numberless instances, particularly in the prophets. Gr. 'I destroy them and the earth,' i. e. probably, 'even the earth.'

14. *Make thee an ark.* Heb. תִּבְנֶה תֵּבָה. The original word which occurs only here and Ex. 2. 3, where it is



applied to the ark of bulrushes in which Moses was laid, is different from the term used for the 'ark of the covenant' (ארון *aron*) Ex. 25. 10. But in the Greek the same term (κιβωτος *kibotos*) signifying a *hollow chest* is applied to both. Comp. Heb. 11. 7, with 9. 4. As to the form of the ark, there is much difference of opinion among commentators. As it was not constructed so much with a view to progressive motion, as to float for a given time upon the water, it is not necessary to suppose it to have been modelled like the hull of a modern ship, or placed in a sort of boat, as in the common figures. We may be content with the simple idea given in the text, which is that of an enormous oblong box or flat bottomed wooden house, divided into three stories, and apparently with a sloping roof. Had it been built from a keel, with a curving bottom like a ship, it could not well have rested on the dry land after the flood without falling over upon one side or other to the imminent peril of all its inmates. Moreover, it is clear that it was not furnished with either mast, rudder, or sails; so that in all these particulars the work was a still greater trial of Noah's faith. The most moderate statement of its dimensions makes the ark by far the largest vessel ever made to float upon the water, as will appear from the statements below. — ¶ *Of gopher-wood.* Heb. עצי גפר *atze gopher*, probably trees or rather woods of pitch, i. e. such as the pine, fir, cypress, turpentine, cedar, and other trees of a pitchy kind adapted to the purpose of ship-building. It is doubtful whether גפר *gopher* is the name of any particular species of tree; if it were, usual analogy would seem to require that it should be in the plural, like עצי ארזים *wood of cedar-trees*, עצי ברשמים *wood of fir-trees*, עצי אלמוגים *wood of almu-g-trees*. This is the common and almost uniform phraseology. On the other hand

we find עצי לבונה *wood of frankincense*, i. e. odoriferous wood, עצי שמן *wood of oil*, i. e. wood producing oil; and in like manner, we take עצי גפר to signify *wood of pitch*, or in other words as a *general* term for any kind of resinous wood suitable for the purpose. If any particular species of tree of this description be intended more than another, it is probably the *cypress* Gr. (κυπρίσος *kuprissos*), as the radical consonants (קפס and גפר) in the Greek and Hebrew words are the same, and as the cypress is eminently distinguished for its durability and the power of resisting the injuries incident to other kinds of wood, while its resinous properties would tend to render it impenetrable to water. Being a very compact and heavy kind of wood, and not liable to rot or become worm-eaten, it was much used in the construction of coffins among the Athenians, and of mummy-cases among the Egyptians. It is said too that the gates of St. Peter's church at Rome, which lasted from the time of Constantine to that of Eugene the fourth, that is to say, eleven hundred years, had in that period suffered no decay. This tree, therefore, if any, would seem to have the best title to the credit of having furnished the material for the ark, though it is highly probable that different kinds of pitchy or resinous wood would be employed in different parts of the structure. — ¶ *Rooms shalt thou make in the ark.* Heb. קנים *nests*; metaphorically applied to the numerous cells, cabins, or small apartments into which the interior of the ark was laid out. Chal. 'mansions.' Comp. Job 29. 18. Obad. 4, where the word occurs in the sense of *dwelling-places*. — ¶ *Pitch it within and without with pitch.* Heb. כפרה בכפר *kapharta bakkopher*, thou shalt coat it with a coating. The Heb. כפר *kopher*, closely related in sound and sense to גפר *gopher* above, as well

15 And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

as to גֹּפְרִית *gophrith*, sulphur, is supposed to denote some kind of bituminous substance which from its soft and pliable qualities was well adapted to smearing over the ark and closing every chink and crevice. A coat of it spread over the inside and outside of the ark besides producing a wholesome smell would make it perfectly water-proof, and the more so as the substance itself would probably be continually acquiring greater tenacity and hardness. The original word, כֹּפֶר *kopher* is worthy of notice as the parent of our English word *cover*, and from its root כָּפַר *kaphar* being often used in the sense of *expiating*, *atoning*, i. e. *covering*, *sin*; whence the noun itself in almost every other instance in the Scriptures is rendered 'atonement.' From the peculiar use of the term in this connection, some have supposed that we are to recognise in the ark thus covered a designed emblem of the church, the ark of salvation, the inmates of which are secured by the effects of Christ's atonement from the overflowing waters of God's wrath.

15. *The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, &c.* The ark, therefore, was by far the largest floating edifice ever borne upon the waters. There is some doubt as to the kind of cubit here alluded to; whether it were the common cubit of eighteen inches or the sacred cubit of about three inches longer. But taking the shortest of the two, it is capable of demonstration, that it must have been been of the burden of 43,413 tons. Now a first-rate man-of-war is between 2200 and 2300 tons; the ark consequently possessed a capacity of storage equal to that of eighteen

16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof: *with* lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

ships of the line of the largest class, which upon a very moderate computation are capable of carrying 20,000 men, with stores and provisions for six month's consumption, besides 1800 pieces of cannon. As all the various distinct species of four-footed animals may be reduced to two hundred or two hundred and fifty, it cannot for a moment be doubted, that the ark would contain the specified proportion of these, of birds, insects, and eight human beings, with the requisite supplies of food for a year. Indeed the truth is, as Bp. Wilkins has observed, 'that of the two, it is much more difficult to assign a number and bulk of creatures necessary to answer the capacity of the ark, than to find sufficient room for the several species of animals already known to have been there.' The objection therefore sometimes urged, that the ark was incapable of affording accommodation to its alleged inmates, falls to the ground.—According to the measurements given, the ark, being six times as long as it was broad, and ten times as long as it was high, had nearly the proportions of a perfect human body.

16. *A window shalt thou make to the ark.* Heb. תְּצַחַר *tzohar*. The true import of this word it is difficult to fix, as it occurs nowhere else but here. If taken to signify but a single window for so immense a building, it exhibits a sense which we may well hesitate to admit. It is a wholly different word from that used for the window (חֹלֶן *halon*) which Noah is said ch. 8. 6, to have opened at the end of forty days, and unquestionably denotes an entirely different object. But what that object was precisely we

17 \* And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

r ver. 13. ch. 7. 4, 21, 22, 23. 2 Pet. 2. 5.

have not the means of ascertaining. That it was someway connected with the transmission of light, appears plain both from testimony of the ancient versions and from the etymological relations of the word. Its cognate roots

זָהָר *zahar*, טָהַר *tahar*, צָהַל *tzahal* all convey the idea of *light, shining, splendour*, and we find יִצְחָר *yitzhor*, *oil*, so called from its *shining*. Moreover

we meet with צְהָרַיִם *tzahorayim* signifying *noon, noon-day light*, and occurring in the dual form, probably as intensive, denoting the *strongest, brightest*, i. e. the *meridian, light*. On the whole, we take it as a collective term for *sky-lights* constructed in some way in the roof of the ark, and perhaps of some transparent substance now unknown. To some contrivance of this nature may probably be traced the conceits of the ancient Rabbins relative to the *tzohar*. Thus in the 'Pirke Eliezer,' ch. 23, it is said, 'A certain precious stone was suspended in the ark, which gave light to all the creatures therein, like a brightly shining candle.' And the Targum of Jonathan represents God as saying to Noah, 'Go thou to the Pison, and take thence a precious stone, and place it in the ark for the dispensation of light.'

—¶ In a cubit shalt thou finish it above. That is, the ark, not the window. The roof was to be raised in the middle like that of a house so as admit of a gentle slope on each side. The elevation was to be one cubit above the horizontal plane; or in other words, what are technically termed the *king-posts* supporting the ridge of the roof at either end, were to be one cubit in

18 But with thee will I establish my covenant: and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

s ch. 7. 1, 7, 13. 1 Pet. 3. 20. 2 Pet. 2. 5.

height.—¶ Door. Heb. פֶּתַח *aper-ture*, the open space in which a door is hung; for the door itself the language has another term. See note on Gen. 19. 10. The word is here doubtless to be taken in a collective sense, implying a number of openings in the different stories of the ark, designed for entrances for the animals, and afterwards probably for the admission of air and the discharge of ordure. As the ark, by its peculiar house-like construction, was adapted to float on a smooth sea, rather than to ride on a tempestuous one, we perceive no difficulty attending this mode of ventilation. The apertures might ordinarily be closed by lattice-work.

17. Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters. Heb. מַבּוּל *am bringing*, i. e. about to bring. See on v. 13. The announcement of the fearful resolve is repeated to give it more emphasis. Thus when Joseph was called to interpret the dream of Pharaoh, he observed concerning its being *doubled*, that was 'because the thing was established by God, and God would shortly bring it to pass.' Such strong language would convey moreover the impression, which was probably designed, that the threatened flood should not be owing to natural causes, but to the immediate agency of omnipotence; and it is somewhat remarkable that the original word here used for *flood* (מַבּוּל *mabbul*, Gr. *κατακλυσμος cataclysm*) is limited, in its application, to the *general deluge*, not being employed in reference to any other kind of inundation; as if the spirit would intimate by this appropriate

19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep *them* alive with thee: they shall be male and female.

20 Of fowls after their kind

t ch. 7. 8, 9, 15, 16.

term that the present judgment was to be unique in its character; that however many partial inundations might happen in particular countries, there was never to be but *one* general deluge.

18. *With thee will I establish my covenant.* That is, do enter with thee into a solemn engagement, pledging myself to thy preservation by bringing thee and thine into the ark. As the work in which Noah was now to engage was in itself arduous and likely to be attended with many trials arising from the unbelief and malice of an ungodly world, such a gracious assurance was peculiarly seasonable, and calculated greatly to animate him in the undertaking. The original term rendered 'covenant' (ברית *berith*), for the most part though not always, implies a mutual compact between two parties, and in this instance not only involves the idea of a pledge, promise, or assurance on the part of God, but a re-stipulation also on that of Noah, that he would in faith and obedience construct and enter the ark, and commit himself in simple trust to the keeping of a faithful providence. The matter and conditions of the covenant appear to be contained in the ensuing verses to the 21st. These comprise the *things covenanted*, and as the performance of them supposes the agency both of God and Noah, hence the reciprocal character of the compact is manifest.

19. *Of every living thing.* Excepting of course the tenants of the deep. —¶ *Two of every sort.* Or, Heb. 'by twos,' i. e. by pairs. There were to be *at least* two, but of the clean beasts more. Gen. 7. 2. —¶ *To keep*

and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind; two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive.

u ch. 7. 9, 15. See ch. 2. 19.

*them alive with thee.* Heb. להחיות *le-hayot* that thou mayest nourish. Gr. *ἐταψα* *etapsa* that thou mayest nourish. The precise shade of meaning conveyed by the original of this word is often lost sight of in our translation. The verb חיה *chay* to live in what are termed the Piel and Hiphil conjugations, which have a *causative* import, for the most part denotes not so much the *continued* preservation as the *revival* or *restoration* of life from a previous state of *actual* or *virtual* death. The English word *quicken* is perhaps its best representative in such cases. Thus 1 Sam. 2. 6, 'The Lord killeth and maketh alive (מחיה *mechay*).' Ps. 30. 3, 'Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive (חיהני *chayani*) that I should not go down to the pit;' i. e. thou hast quickened me when virtually by my imminent exposure I had descended to the pit. 2 Kings, 8. 1, 'Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life (חיהה *chayah*).' See my notes on Josh. 6. 25 and 14. 10, where this sense of the term is still more fully illustrated. Here the word is in the Hiphil or causative form, and doubtless carries with it the implication, that the creatures to be kept alive in the ark were *virtually extinct* by means of the general judgment of the deluge, and that their preservation was no other than a kind of *revival* or *resuscitation of life* to them. 'A life remarkably protracted is, as it were, a new life.' Henry. For a strikingly similar phraseology, see Ex. 7. 14—15. and what is there said of Pharaoh's being raised up, i. e. quickened, from virtual destruction. —¶ *Shall come unto*

21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather *it* to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

*thee.* Probably in consequence of a divine impulse, as the animal tribes were before brought to Adam, Gen. 2. 19. He was thus assured that God would collect the proper freight when he had prepared the vessel. Though we may often be in the dark how things shall be brought about, yet if we are acting under the divine command, and trusting upon the divine promise, he will bring it to pass.—¶ *To keep them alive.* A Hebrew idiom for 'that they may be kept alive.' Thus Eccl. 3. 2, 'A time to be born (Heb. לָלֶדֶת to bear or give birth to).' Est. 6. 6, 'And the king said unto him, *What shall be done* (Heb. מַה לַעֲשׂוֹת *what to do*) unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?' Ex. 9. 16, 'That my name *may be declared* (Heb. סָפַר *to declare* my name) throughout all the earth.'

22. *Thus did Noah, &c.* Viewed in all its circumstances this was undoubtedly one of the sublimest acts of obedience ever rendered by fallen man to his Creator. The words of the apostle Heb. 11. 7, afford the only adequate solution of his conduct; 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' The labour and expense necessary in building a vessel of such vast magnitude must have been immense; and the unbelief and ridicule which the measure would naturally encounter, almost beyond endurance. Yet under the prompting of faith he engaged in the work and persisted in it to the end. Though for the space of 120 years there was no symptom of the coming judgment, and though during that long period he was

22 \* Thus did Noah; \* according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

w Heb. 11. 7. See Ex. 40. 16. x ch. 7. 5, 9, 16.

undoubtedly an object of general derision, yet he persevered in his preparations. The divine testimony was to him in the place of all other evidence. He did not *reason* on the subject that was revealed to him. He did not say, How can such a deluge be produced? How can it be supposed that a merciful God should exercise such severity? or, How can it be hoped, that if all the rest be destroyed any vessel that I can build will preserve me? It is probable that *others* argued thus; but *he* believed and acted upon the divine declaration. Had such a conduct been exhibited during the space of a few days only, we should have been the less astonished at it; but when we see it continuing without intermission or abatement for the lapse of more than a century, we are ready to regard it as one of the most illustrious triumphs of faith ever witnessed or recorded. But we are equally instructed by the fatal perverseness and obstinacy of the great mass of the antediluvian world. They saw no appearance of any deluge; nor could they persuade themselves that God would ever inflict such a tremendous judgment on the earth. The first beams of the ark were probably laid across each other amidst the insulting scoffs of hardened spectators. But the building advanced. Some admired the structure; some derided the plan; some charged him with superstition, enthusiasm, or insanity; more were sunk in sensuality; and all united in the desperate resolution to treat his warnings with contempt. Still he entreated, and still they spurned his admonitions. The edifice continued to rise day after day, and yet the voice of profane railery was heard on every side. Thus it continued till the crisis arrived. With



strange infatuation they stopped their ears against the sound of the voice which with unwearied perseverance solicited them to be saved. The calamity which they despised came upon them with all its terrors, and as they sank in the mighty waters, their last breath must have sighed out a mournful condemnation of their folly. Alas! how faithful a picture this of the madness of mankind under the threatenings of the Gospel! Yet as with the antediluvians, so with the men of every generation shall it be found true, that 'he that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' The unbelief of Noah's contemporaries did not make void the truth of God; nay, it rather hardened them to their destruction. What security then will our unbelief afford us? Grant that we see not at present any presage of the wrath which is threatened against an ungodly world; will it therefore never come? Will the word of God fail of its accomplishment? Is it safe for us to set up our opinions against the positive declarations of Heaven? and to found our hopes of salvation upon the presumption that 'God will lie?' Seen or unseen, our danger is the same: and if all perished in the deluge who took not refuge in the ark, so will all perish in the day of judgment, who have not 'fled for refuge to the hope set before them.'

REMARKS.—A few additional reflections suggest themselves so strongly from the foregoing narrative that we know not how to refuse them a place.

(1.) We are here reminded of the dangerous consequences of forming improper connections. Familiar associations with the wicked will soon contaminate the most virtuous mind, and destroy the influence of religious principle. The extreme hazard that arises from overlooking the grand requisite in the character of a companion for life is here most vividly set forth. The at-

tractive influence of the females of Cain's posterity soon corrupted the pure principles of their husbands. Those who once enjoyed the high distinction of being called the 'sons of God,' became ere long as vile as their licentious partners, so that there was scarcely a vestige of true religion left upon the earth. The woman who is possessed of all other accomplishments, and yet devoid of religious sentiments, is a perilous companion for a pious man who is desirous of serving God with all his house. Her power and persuasions will only weaken his virtuous resolutions or counteract his devoted efforts. Children and domestics will entertain but little respect for religion while the mistress of the family slights it by her neglect, or sets herself in opposition to its claims. Whatever difference or contrariety there may be in other points of the character, there should be union and harmony and sympathy here. The great ends of this sacred relation may not be essentially prejudiced by many little diversities of taste and habit, springing from difference in constitutional temperament, from education, or other causes, but a fearful risk is run wherever the love of God on the one side meets with its reverse on the other. 'How can two walk together except they be agreed?' Let the young then of either sex be peculiarly heedful in ascertaining the principles and characters of those with whom they may have a thought of connecting themselves for life. It is a momentous consideration, and neither the attractions of face or form, or the most captivating address should be allowed to blind our better judgment or give law to the most important choice we can make in this world, next to choosing whether we will serve God or no. The example of a pious companion may indeed not be without its influence upon a thoughtless, worldly, or vitiated mind,

and in some cases may even avail to effect a reformation. But the hazard as a general rule, is too great to be ventured, and common prudence will decide against it.

(2.) What a call have we to being humbled in the fact that we are partakers of a nature of which such a shocking picture is drawn by the historian in his account of the manners of the old world! The blandishments of vice having prevailed, gay amusements paved the way to immorality, and the neglect of devotion led to infidelity and idolatry. With but one solitary known exception, the race became at length so completely sunk in sensuality and atheism, so lost to all sense of shame and desire of amendment, that they are characterized as governed only by a continual thirst for evil, without one intervening moment of consideration or remorse! Yet the nature of that generation is *our* nature, and *we* too are capable of all the abominations which brought the deluge upon the world of the ungodly. Though restrained by a merciful Providence from acting out all the evils of our hearts, yet when we turn our eyes inward and look upon our *thoughts*, and the *imaginings* of our thoughts, what report must we give of them? Have they been such as would bear the test of scrutiny?—such that we could bear that man should see them as God has seen them? The proud, the envious, the uncharitable, the angry, the revengeful, the impure thoughts of which we have been conscious, have they not sprung up in our hearts as their proper soil, and occupied the ground to the exclusion of the fruits of holiness? And if occasionally a transient thought of good has arisen, how coldly has it been entertained, how feebly has it operated, how soon has it been lost! What then becomes us but the deepest humiliation? How should we sink into the

utmost prostration of spirit, and abhor ourselves in dust and ashes!

(3.) What a constraining power should attach to the example of Noah! Nothing can be more honourable than to stand firm and unmoved in a time of general infidelity and corruption. What a noble spectacle is a man of unbending integrity in the midst of a degenerate age—one who dares to set his face as a flint and be, if we may so say, *obstinately virtuous*! Such was Noah. How unshaken did he remain while the whole force of public example, charged with odium against dissenters, was bearing down upon him as with a mighty current! Yet he boldly faced reproach and meekly encountered scorn. Instead of swerving at all from the path of duty under an apprehension of the *unpopularity* of such a course, he persisted in it to the end. Instead of concealing his commission through fear or perverting it from a regard to personal convenience or advantage, he protested with earnestness against the sins of his cotemporaries, their idolatry, violence, debauchery, and injustice. Let us emulate this noble model. It may indeed make us singular; but whose fault is that? Was it Noah's fault that he was singular in the old world? Was it not the fault of those who refused to listen to the voice of mercy and to obey the commands of God? And would not Noah have paid a very unbecoming deference to the world had he yielded to their influence and consented to perish with them rather than secure his own salvation? Let us not then carry our complaisance to such a fearful extent where we have so much at stake. We may confess that we regret being compelled to be singular, that we are not singular for singularity's sake, but that we deem it better to be saved with Noah and his little family, than to perish with the multitude; that it is better to walk in the narrow

## CHAPTER VII.

AND the LORD said unto Noah,  
\* Come thou and all thine

a ver. 7. 13. Matt. 24. 38. Luke, 17. 26. Heb. 11. 7. 1 Pet. 3. 20. 2 Pet. 2. 5.

and unfrequented way which leads to life, than to go in the broad road which terminates in destruction.

## CHAPTER VII.

1. *Come thou and all thine house into the ark.* Heb. כָּנַח *enter*, i. e. prepare, make thyself ready, to enter; for the *actual* entrance was not to be till seven days afterwards. The performance of what was foretold in the preceding chapter, both concerning the destruction of the old world and the salvation of Noah, begins here to be related. Though Noah had finished the ark and stored it with all its provisions, and though he knew it was designed for a place of refuge for him, yet he awaits further intimations of the divine will before entering it. If we would see God going before us in every step we take, let us wait for and then follow the evident calls of his Providence. This is not the only instance in which, when impending ills were about to burst upon the world, God has, in effect, said, 'Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast.' In the midst of coming judgments the Lord remembers his servants and provides for their well-being; and often not for theirs only, but for that of others for their sakes. It was Noah and his house who were now to enter into the ark of safety, though it is certain from the subsequent narrative that his children did not all partake of his pious spirit. But it should not be forgotten, that though temporal blessings may be given to the ungodly children of godly parents, yet without walking in their steps they will not be

house into the ark: for <sup>b</sup> thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

b ch. 6. 9. Ps. 33. 18, 19. Pr. 10. 9. 2 Pe. 2. 9.

partakers with them in those which are spiritual and eternal. In view of the events here recorded it is also an affecting thought that there should be *no more* than Noah and his family to enter the ark. Peter speaks of them as 'few;' and few they were compared with the vast multitudes left behind. 'What a wonder of mercy is this that I here see! One poor family culled out of a world, and, as it were, eight grains of corn fanned from a whole barn-ful of chaff.' *Bp. Hall*. Though Noah had been for so many years a 'preacher of righteousness,' yet it does not appear that even *one* sinner was brought to repentance and made desirous of casting in his lot with him. The Lord's servants at this day are prone to mourn over the little success of their ministry, but his, so far as appears, was without *any*; yet, like Enoch, he pleased God. This shews that it is the *labour*, and not the *fruits* of it, which secures the divine favour.—¶ *For thee have I seen righteous before me.* The testimony of God as to Noah's righteousness is here repeated in order to manifest the *reason* of the difference put between him and the world. This does not imply that the favour shewn to him was to be ascribed to his own merit; for what he was, he was by grace; and all his righteousness was rewardable only out of respect to Him in whom he believed; but his person being accepted for his sake, his works also were accepted and honoured, and a visible demonstration of the divine favour made towards him.

2. *Of every clean beast.* The distinction of clean and unclean, it appears, existed before the flood; not that any of the animal creation were in

2 Of every ° clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; ° and of beasts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female.

3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female;

c ver. 8. Lev. ch. 11. d Lev. 10. 10. Ez. 44. 23.

*themselves* more unclean than others, but the difference was made wholly by Divine appointment. The ground of the distinction, however, before and after the flood, was not precisely the same. Before that event the unclean were so considered merely because they were not to be used for *sacrifice*; after it, because there were some that were not to be used for *food*; Lev. 11. Deut. 14. Yet it is still possible Moses *may* here speak prophetically, in reference to the animals which were *afterwards* distinguished as clean and unclean in the Levitical law. If so, the number of *clean* creatures that went into the ark was small, and, with their provision, would not take up much room; for only beeves, sheep, goats, turtle-doves and pigeons were allowed for sacrifice. Lev. 1. 3.—22. 19.—¶ *Take to thee by sevens, &c.* Heb. 'seven, seven.' Three couple for breed, and the odd seventh for sacrifice, ch. 8. 20. It would seem at first view that this direction differed from that in ch. 6. 19, 20, which mentions only two of every sort. But the meaning there may be, that whatever number entered, they should go in in *pairs*, i. e. male and female: whereas here the direction is more particular, appointing the number of pairs that should be admitted according as they were clean or unclean. 'But why seven? Surely that God that created seven days in the week, and made one for himself, did here preserve, of seven clean beasts, one for himself for sacrifice. He gives us six for one in

to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth ° forty days and forty nights: and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

e ver. 12. 17.

earthly things, that in spiritual we should be all for him.' *Bp. Hall.*

4. *For yet seven days.* Heb. לִימִרָם לְיָמֵי עוֹד שִׁבְעָה *to yet seven days*; i. e. the seventh day after this, as v. 10. So 'yet three days,' 2 Chron. 10. 5, is in v. 12 shewn to be *in the third day*. Comp. Gen. 40. 13, 20. The Heb. לְ is sometimes used for *after*, as Ex. 16. 1. Ps. 19. 3. Num. 33. 38. Ju. 41. 4. Ezra, 3. 8. Just one week therefore was allowed for Noah to embark and for the world to repent; and what a week was this! What feelings of intense anxiety must it have excited! His neighbours had seen him busily employed for the last hundred and twenty years in rearing the massy fabric; and doubtless had indulged many a laugh at his folly and credulity; and now, behold! the time is come that he is to remove all his family into it, with the rest of the living creatures commanded. They on the other hand were no doubt saying to each other, 'A week longer, and we shall see what will become of his dreams!' continuing in the meanwhile eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage. But their festivities were as short as they were senseless and profane. '(Thus) it is common for those who have been careless of their souls during the years of their health, when they have looked upon death at a distance, to be as careless during the days, the seven days, of their sickness, when they see it approaching, their hearts being hardened through the de-

5 'And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him.

6 And Noah *was* six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

7 ¶ And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts

f ch. 6. 22. g ver. 1.

ceitfulness of sin.' Henry.—¶ *I will cause it to rain.* Heb. 'I am causing,' i. e. will cause, as rightly rendered in our version. Thus, 'thou heaping coals,' Prov. 25. 22, is translated, 'thou shalt heap,' Rom. 12. 20.—¶ *Forty days and forty nights.* The number *forty* seems to have become remarkable from this event, and especially to have been regarded as a suitable period for humiliation. Thus Moses, Elijah, and Christ fasted forty days; forty days' reprieve was given to the Ninevites to repent; and the children of Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness.—¶ *Every living substance.* Heb. יָקִים *standing thing*; i. e. whatever by a principle of life is capable of maintaining an erect posture; whereas a dead body lies prostrate. Comp. ch. 6. 7, with 7. 23. The original term occurs Deut. 11. 6. Job 22. 20, in both which cases it is rendered 'substance.'—¶ *I will I destroy.* Heb. 'wipe out.' See above on ch. 6. 7.

6. *Six hundred years old.* Heb. 'a son of 600 years;' i. e. going on in his six hundredth year; v. 11.—¶ *Was upon the earth.* That is, began to be. Thus ch. 5. 3, 'Begot;' i. e. began to beget. Rev. 11. 17, 'Hast reigned;' i. e. began to reign.

7. *Because of the waters.* Heb. 'from before, or from the face of, the waters.'

10. *After seven days.* Heb. 'at the

that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,

9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

10 And it came to pass, after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

11 ¶ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second

seventh of the days;' but our version follows the Greek *μετα τας εττα ημερας* *after the seven days*, though the meaning is, on the seventh day. As soon as he was safely lodged, the flood began to come. So God waits now only for his last saint to be gathered in and for the number of his chosen to be accomplished, and then a more terrible deluge of fire shall descend upon the ungodly.

11. *The second month.* Before the departure from Egypt the Israelites began their year about the 22d of September, and therefore the 17th day of the second month answers to about the 6th of November. This according to the Hebrew computation was 1656 years from the creation.—¶ *The fountains of the great deep broken up.* Heb. מַעְיֵנות הַיָּם רַבָּה *fountains of the great abyss*. That is, fountains which were supposed to be outlets to streams connected with a great subterranean body of waters called *the abyss*, a sense which the term undoubtedly has Deut. 8. 7. Ezek. 31. 4, although it is not necessary to conceive such a central collection of waters as *really* existing. The language is merely adapted to popular impressions on the subject. In the ordinary state of things, these fountains or vents would not admit a very copious discharge of waters, but now being vio-



month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all <sup>h</sup> the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the <sup>i</sup> windows of heaven were opened.

12 <sup>k</sup> And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 In the self-same day <sup>i</sup> entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah,

<sup>h</sup> ch. 8. 2. Prov. 8. 28. Ezek. 26. 19. <sup>i</sup> ch. 1. 7. & 8. 2. Ps. 78. 23. <sup>k</sup> ver. 4. 17. <sup>i</sup> ver. 1. 7. ch. 6. 18. Heb. 11. 7. <sup>i</sup> Pet. 3. 20. <sup>2</sup> Pet. 2. 5.

lently 'broken up,' or vastly enlarged, they would discharge such immense floods as would quickly deluge the plains and valleys in every direction.

—¶ *The windows of heaven.* Gr. *καταπάρται* cataracts. Aq. and Sym. *θυρίδες* doors, apertures. Here again the language is figurative. The original term *אַרְבוֹת* *aruboth* is applied to such windows as are made of lattice-work, and in this connection their being opened (see Gen. 8. 6) implies that the water, instead of gently descending in drops, as if made to percolate through a net-work medium, fell in torrents like water-spouts, as though the windows had been opened for this purpose on hinges, and every obstruction were removed. The marginal rendering therefore of 'sluices, or flood-gates,' though wholly paraphrastic is well suited to the idea. It is said Job, 26. 8, that God 'bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.' But now the bond was loosed, the cloud was rent, and such rains descended as were never known before nor since, in such abundance and such continuance. Mr. Roberts remarks that it is still customary for people to say in the East, when the rain falls in torrents, 'the heavens are broken.' It is probably not in the power of language to convey an adequate description of the terrors of the scene; of the disruption from beneath and the

and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark:

14 <sup>m</sup> They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.

m ver. 2, 3, 8, 9.

cataract fall of waters from above, the ocean meanwhile swelling and over-leaping all its former bounds.

12. *The rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.* That is, the rain now began to fall which continued falling for forty days and nights. The narrative teaches us that when God pleases to avenge his quarrel with rebellious man, all creatures and all elements above, below, around, become the ready instruments of his judgments. The judgment now was by water, but let us remember that there are within the earth, as in the heavens above, storehouses of fire, as well as water; and that this world is doomed one day to experience their fatal influence. Be it our care then to secure a covert from the impending storm in Him who is the only refuge; and then, 'when thou passest through the waters they shall not overflow thee; and when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt.'

13. *In the self-same day.* Heb. 'in the bone, strength, or existence of this day;' i. e. of the day stated v. 11. A phrase intended to convey the idea of the utmost precision of time. Arab. 'In the essence of that day.' Chal. 'In the point or article of that day.' Gen. 17. 23. Lev. 23. 14. Josh. 10. 27.

14. *Every beast after his kind.* Estimating that just as many kinds as were created at first were now saved,

15 And they <sup>a</sup> went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.

16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh,

n ch. 6. 20.

and no more. — ¶ *Every bird of every sort.* Heb. כָּל כָּנָף of every wing; a general phrase for any thing that flies, embracing not only feathered fowls, but such winged creatures as bats and the larger kinds of insects, whose wings are often membranous or cartilaginous. See note on Gen 1. 20.

15. *They went in unto Noah into the ark.* Unquestionably by a divine instinct, especially as it would seem that Noah and his family entered first, and the animals and birds of their own accord by pairs afterwards. Their mutual enmities were so restrained for the time that the most fierce and ravenous became mild and manageable; thus realizing for once the beautiful language of the prophet, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the cow and the bear shall feed, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.' Yet they afterwards, when freed from this temporary restraint, assumed their respective natures. 'Hypocrites in the church, that externally conform to the laws of that ark, may yet be unchanged; and then it will appear, one time or other, what kind they are after.' *Henry.*

16. *And the Lord shut him in.* Heb. שָׁטַח בְּעֶדְרָה shut or closed round about him. Gr. 'shut the ark on the outside of him.' Chal. 'protected over him.' The English version is too definite to answer fairly to the original. It is by no means clear that the words were intended to intimate a direct interposition of Jehovah in closing and fastening the door after Noah. We can see no more

as God had commanded him, and the LORD shut him in.

17 <sup>p</sup> And the flood was forty days upon the earth: and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.

o ver. 2, 3. p ver. 4. 12.

difficulty in Noah's making provision for this, than in any other part of the mechanism of the ark. We therefore take the sense to be, that the ark and its inmates now became the special objects of the divine care and protection, and that a superintending providence so completely encompassed the structure, that not only were its inmates perfectly secured within, but also all other persons, as well as the waters, were effectually precluded from without. And these two ideas of *closing* and *excluding* are both conveyed by the original as may be seen, Ps. 35. 3. 2 Kings, 4. 4, 5. There is probably at the same time a latent implication that without such protection the ark would have been liable to a violent assault from the desperate multitudes, who, from the character given of that generation, were undoubtedly capable of the most flagrant outrages. The Most High therefore, provided that Noah, in finally closing the entrance of the ark, should utterly debar admission to all who had hitherto refused to enter. No doubt when they began to see the lowering cloud and the rising waters, numbers crowded round importunate for that admission which they had before slighted. But 'the Lord protected round about him.' It was now too late. An immoveable barricado forbade all farther ingress, and they had only to await their fate. And let it be considered that something very nearly resembling this will ere long be acted over again. 'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man.' Not

18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth: <sup>q</sup> and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

q Ps. 104. 26.

only shall the world, as then, be full of dissipation, but the concluding scene is described in nearly the same words, 'And they that were ready went in, and the door was shut!'

17. *Forty days.* That is, larger days, including the nights; wherefore the Gr. has 'forty days and forty nights.' This of course implies not the whole term of the prevalence of the waters, which was 150 days, but merely that after the rain had fallen forty days and the sea had continued to rise, the ark was floating on the surface. It was probably 150 days before they reached their utmost height.—¶ *It was lifted up above the earth.* Heb. 'it was on high from upon the earth.' The original denotes not the act, but the state of being lifted up or elevated.

18. *The waters prevailed.* Heb. יגברו *yigberu*. The words denote being strong, mighty, and prevalent in despite of opposition; and therefore here implies the conquering or carrying every thing before it, throwing down and sweeping away buildings, trees, and living creatures, and causing universal devastation. 'Where now were those profane scoffers, that asked what Noah meant to build such a vessel? And whether, when he had made his ship, he would also make a sea for it to swim in?' Trapp.—¶ *The ark went upon the face of the waters.* Heb. הלך *halak* walked; i. e. was borne by a gentle, equable motion, and not violently tossed or driven, to which its form was not adapted. Whether this was owing to a miracle, or to the fact that the rising of the waters was comparatively calm and unattended with tempestuous agitation, though still marked with

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; <sup>r</sup> and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered.

r Ps. 104. 6. Jer. 3. 23.

all the desolating effects described above, it is not easy to determine. The probability we think is, that the latter was the case, and that the appearances on the surface of the earth indicating violent disruptions are to be referred rather to some anterior deluge or deluges, of unknown date in the history of our globe, of which the sacred record makes no mention. That the rains, however, at first would produce all the common effects of a desolating freshet, is obvious. But these effects would naturally cease as the waters rose. They would become calm in proportion as they became deep; unless the action of wind be supposed; of which there is no intimation till after the flood had continued an hundred and fifty days.

19. *All the high hills—were covered.* Rather 'the high mountains' (Heb. הרים *harim*), as the original word is the same with that so rendered in the next verse. It seems scarcely possible, from the language of this and the ensuing verse, to resist the conclusion that the deluge was universal. Doubts have indeed been entertained on this score by writers of eminence, many of whom contend that as the deluge had for its main object the destruction of man, it was therefore useless that a general catastrophe of this kind should submerge the parts of the earth not then inhabited. It is also unquestionable that learned men have in later times so modified their opinions in regard to the present visible traces of the Noachian deluge, that many of them are becoming less and less satisfied that any physical evidence exists at all of such an event. But even if this be ad-

20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail: and the mountains were covered.

21 \* And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and

s ch. 6. 13, 17. ver. 4. Job 22. 16. Matt. 24. 39. Luke 17. 27. 2 Pet. 3. 6.

mitted, as a tenable hypothesis, still it does not avail to set aside the recorded evidence of the *fact* of the occurrence of such a deluge as Moses here describes—a deluge that was strictly universal in its extent. For though it be granted that Moses was not acquainted with the true form or size of the earth, and though to himself the language which he employed may have conveyed only the idea of the then inhabited earth, yet writing under inspiration he may have been led to adopt expressions more accurately coinciding with the fact, and there is certainly an emphasis in the expression, ‘under the whole heaven,’ which in our view can import nothing less than the *absolute universality* of the deluge. Besides, it would not be difficult to show the very high probability that the earth then contained a vastly greater population than it ever has since, so that the whole race could only have been destroyed by making the flood universal. As to the source from whence the vast mass of diluvial waters were derived, if a miracle be admitted at all in the case, no farther inquiry is necessary; but apart from this consideration it is now agreed by the most competent judges, that there is water enough pertaining to the body of the globe to produce all the results described, though the highest mountains were covered even to the depth of fifteen cubits, or 22½ feet. As to the precise *manner* in which they were made to pour themselves out of their ordinary receptacles and overwhelm the earth so completely, this will probably continue to give rise to

of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

22 All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died.

t ch. 2. 7.

different theories among geologists for a long time to come, even should it ever be finally and satisfactorily settled. Whatever may be the truth respecting it, it does not properly fall within the range of these annotations.

22. *The breath of life.* Heb. ‘the breath of the spirit of life.’ But our version follows the Gr. πνοή ζωῆς *breath of life.*—¶ *That was in the dry land;* thus excepting the fish of the sea, but extending the destruction to every tenant of the surface of the earth save those included in the ark. If this scene of terrific and awful desolation be rightly conceived, it will be seen how inadequate and infinitely below the real facts are all those representations of the deluge to which we have been accustomed. It appears from the narrative that the waters were 150 days advancing to their greatest height, and 275 days in descending; the period of their returning off the earth being nearly twice as long as their rising. Taking the height of the loftiest elevations of the earth, the snowy mountains of India, at a measurement of 28,000 feet above the surface of the ocean, the rate of increase would be upwards of 186 feet per day for the rising of the waters, and 100 feet for their daily decrease. We may see from this how little foundation exists for those comments which exhibit animals and men as *escaping* to the highest grounds and hills, as the flood advanced. The impossibility of any such escape may be immediately seen. Neither man nor beasts under such circumstances could either advance or flee to any distance. Any

23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and <sup>a</sup> Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.

24 <sup>w</sup> And the waters prevailed

<sup>u</sup> 2 Pet. 2. 5. & 3. 6. <sup>w</sup> ch. 8. 3. & ch. 8. 4. compared with ver. 11. of this chap.

animal found in the plain when the flood began would soon be merged in water several feet deep, independent of the overwhelming torrents dashing upon his head. And were he to attempt advancing up the rising grounds, a cataract or sheet of water, would be gushing all the way in his face, besides impending water from the 'flood-gates' of heaven momentarily rushing over him. He would almost instantly become a prey to the resistless element. 'In vain is salvation hoped for from the hills.' Jer. 3. 23.

23. *Every living substance.* Heb. יָקוּם *yekum*, as above, v. 4, rendered by the Gr. παν ἀναστρεφω *every thing that stood up*.—¶ *Was destroyed.* Rather according to the Heb. 'he, or it (the flood) destroyed (wiped out) every living thing.' The verb is active and not passive, though no nominative is expressed. This has to be supplied by the reader from the tenor of the narrative. 'How securely doth Noah ride out this uproar of heaven, earth, and waters! He hears the pouring down of rain above his head; the shrieking of men, and the roaring and bellowing of beasts on both sides of him; the raging and threats of the waves under him; and the miserable shifts of the unbelievers; and, in the meantime, sits quietly in his dry cabin, neither feeling nor fearing evil. How happy a thing is faith! What a quiet safety, what a heavenly peace, doth it work in the

upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

### CHAPTER VIII.

AND God <sup>a</sup> remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that *was* with him in the ark: <sup>b</sup> and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged;

<sup>a</sup> ch. 19. 29. Ex. 2. 24. 1 Sam. 1. 19. <sup>b</sup> Ex. 14. 21.

soul, in the midst of all the inundations of evil.' *Bp. Hall.*

24. *The waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.* That is, five months, before they began to abate. This might seem to us unnecessary, seeing every living creature would be drowned within the first six weeks; but it would serve to exercise the faith and patience of Noah, and to impress his posterity with the greatness of the divine displeasure against man's sin. As the land of Israel was to have its Sabbath during the captivity; so now the whole earth, for a time, shall be relieved of its load, and fully purified, as it were, from its uncleanness.

### CHAPTER VIII.

1. *God remembered Noah.* That is, put forth a token of his remembrance; acted as a person does who would manifest remembrance towards one who was ready to deem himself forgotten. The phrase is figurative; for, strictly speaking, God cannot be supposed ever to have forgotten Noah from the moment of his entering the ark. But the import here is not that of a constant mindfulness. God remembered Noah *by* making a wind to pass over the earth, to assuage the waters of the deluge. Comp. Gen. 30. 22.—¶ *Made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged.* Heb. יָשְׁכוּ *settled down, sunk, were depressed*, i. e. began to subside; the original being spoken Jer. 5.



2 \* The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and <sup>d</sup> the rain from heaven was restrained ;

3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually:

c ch. 7. 11. d Job 38. 37.

26, of the *stooping posture* of a bird-catcher in laying or watching his snares. It is elsewhere applied to the *subsiding of anger*, Est. 21, and of *murmurings*, Num. 17. 5. The usual effect of wind upon a body of water is to agitate and work it to a tempest ; in this case the effect was directly the reverse ; but for w at reason is not wholly obvious. The blowing of a strong wind from the north, would naturally clear away the clouds from the atmosphere, and thus enable the sun to act upon the watery mass which would cause a rapid evaporation ; but by comparing this with what is said Ex. 14. 21, of the agency of the east wind in drying up the Red Sea, it would seem that the wind acted also *mechanically* in propelling the waters off from the surface of the habitable regions which they had submerged and driving them to their appropriate reservoirs. Yet it is obvious that the ark must have been so situated as to be exempt from this action of the aerial element.

3. *The waters returned—continually.* Heb. הָלִיךְ וָשׁוּב *going or walking and returning* ; a Heb. idiom for expressing the gradual and yet constant progress of any thing. See note on Gen. 3. 8.—¶ *Were abated* ; i. e. went on abating. The true force of the original term is to *become scant*.

4. *The ark rested in the seventh month.* That is, of the year, not of the flood. The flood had now continued precisely five months, or 150 days. For a ship in the sea to have struck upon a rock or upon land, would have been extreme-

ly dangerous ; but as the ark gently settled upon its resting-place, it is evident that the waters were calm. In a stormy sea it would have *foundered* and not *rested* ; at least without a miracle. As Noah seems to have had no agency in steering the ark, it was doubtless conducted hither by the special providence of God, who watches equally over the *floatings* and the *wanderings* of his church.—¶ *Upon the mountains of Ararat.* Heb. עַל הָרֵי אֲרָרָט *al hare Ararat*, literally rendered in our version. The opinion is very general among commentators that this expression, though of a plural form, points at one well known mountain of the same name situated in the modern Armenia. The Heb. אֲרָרָט *Ararat* occurs but in three other places, 2 Kings 19. 37. Is 37. 38. Jer. 51. 27, in the last of which it is rendered as here by *Ararat*, and in the other two by *Arménia*. This mountain, which consists of two separate peaks of unequal elevation, is situated in a vast plain twelve leagues east from Erivan, and rises to an height of upwards of 15,000 above the ocean. It is called by the Eastern people by the various names of *Masis*, *Ardag* or *Agridagh*, i. e. the finger-mountain, from its standing alone and rising like a finger held up, *Kuh Nuach*, or mountains of Noah, and *Meresoussar*, or the stopping of the ark. In like manner the name of the neighbouring city of *Nak-schivan* is said to be composed of two words *Nak*, *ship*, and *Schivan*, *stopped* or *settled* ; all indicating a prevalent tradition that this was

4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

e ch. 7. 24.

ly dangerous ; but as the ark gently settled upon its resting-place, it is evident that the waters were calm. In a stormy sea it would have *foundered* and not *rested* ; at least without a miracle. As Noah seems to have had no agency in steering the ark, it was doubtless conducted hither by the special providence of God, who watches equally over the *floatings* and the *wanderings* of his church.—¶ *Upon the mountains of Ararat.* Heb. עַל הָרֵי אֲרָרָט *al hare Ararat*, literally rendered in our version. The opinion is very general among commentators that this expression, though of a plural form, points at one well known mountain of the same name situated in the modern Armenia. The Heb. אֲרָרָט *Ararat* occurs but in three other places, 2 Kings 19. 37. Is 37. 38. Jer. 51. 27, in the last of which it is rendered as here by *Ararat*, and in the other two by *Arménia*. This mountain, which consists of two separate peaks of unequal elevation, is situated in a vast plain twelve leagues east from Erivan, and rises to an height of upwards of 15,000 above the ocean. It is called by the Eastern people by the various names of *Masis*, *Ardag* or *Agridagh*, i. e. the finger-mountain, from its standing alone and rising like a finger held up, *Kuh Nuach*, or mountains of Noah, and *Meresoussar*, or the stopping of the ark. In like manner the name of the neighbouring city of *Nak-schivan* is said to be composed of two words *Nak*, *ship*, and *Schivan*, *stopped* or *settled* ; all indicating a prevalent tradition that this was

no other than the real resting-place of the ark after the flood. Of a place so memorable it will be proper to give a somewhat more detailed account, notwithstanding the reasons which we shall shortly offer for entertaining very strong doubts whether this were in fact the true locality to which the inspired narrative points. Mr. Morier describes Ararat as being most beautiful in shape, and most awful in height; and Sir Robert Ker Porter has furnished the following graphic picture of this stupendous work of nature:—‘As the vale opened beneath us, in our descent, my whole attention became absorbed in the view before me. A vast plain peopled with countless villages; the towers and spires of the churches of Eitch-miadzen arising from amidst them; the glittering waters of the Araxes flowing through the fresh green of the vale; and the subordinate range of mountains skirting the base of the awful monument of the antediluvial world, it seemed to stand a stupendous link in the history of man, uniting the two races of men before and after the flood. But it was not until we had arrived upon the flat plain that I beheld Ararat in all its amplitude of grandeur. From the spot on which I stood, it appeared as if the hugest mountains of the world had been piled upon each other, to form this one sublime immensity of earth, and rock, and snow. The icy peaks of its double heads rose majestically into the clear and cloudless heavens; the sun blazed bright upon them, and the reflection sent forth a dazzling radiance equal to other suns. This point of the view united the utmost grandeur of plain and height, but the feelings I experienced while looking on the mountain are hardly to be described. My eye, not able to rest for any length of time on the blinding glory of its summits, wandered down the apparently interminable sides, till I could no longer trace their vast lines in the

mists of the horizon; when an inexpressible impulse, immediately carrying my eye upwards again, refixed my gaze on the awful glare of Ararat; and this bewildered sensibility of sight being answered by a similar feeling in the mind, for some moments I was lost in a strange suspension of the powers of thought.’ Of the two separate peaks, called Little and Great Ararat, which are separated by a chasm about seven miles in width, Sir Robert thus speaks;—‘These inaccessible summits have never been trodden by the foot of man, since the days of Noah, if even then, for my idea is that the ark rested in the space between these heads, and not on the top of either. Various attempts have been made in different ages to ascend these tremendous mountain pyramids, but in vain; their form, snows, and glaciers are insurmountable obstacles, the distance being so great from the commencement of the icy regions to the highest points, cold alone would be the destruction of any person who should have the hardihood to persevere. On viewing mount Ararat from the northern side of the plain, its two heads are separated by a wide cleft, or rather glen, in the body of the mountain. The rocky side of the greater head runs almost perpendicularly down to the north-east, while the lesser head rises from the sloping bottom of the cleft, in a perfectly conical shape. Both heads are covered with snow. The form of the greater is similar to the less, only broader and rounder at the top, and shows to the north-west a broken and abrupt front, opening about half way down into a stupendous chasm, deep, rocky, and peculiarly black. At that part of the mountain, the hollow of the chasm receives an interruption from the projection of the minor mountains which start from the side of Ararat, like branches from the roots of a tree, and run along in undulating progression, till lost in the

distant vapours of the plain.' The Rev. E. Smith, American Missionary to Palestine, as will be seen from the following extract, coincides with the popular belief on this subject. 'And certainly not among the mountains of Ararat or of Armenia generally, nor those of any part of the world where I have been, have I ever seen one whose majesty could plead half so powerfully its claims to the honour of having once been the stepping stone between the old world and the new. I gave myself up to the feeling, that on its summit were once congregated all the inhabitants of the earth, and that, while in the valley of the Araxes, I was paying a visit to the second cradle of the human race. Nor can I allow my opinion to be at all shaken by the Chaldee paraphrasts, the Syrian translators and commentators, and the traditions of the whole family of Syrian churches, which translate the passage in question *mountains of the Kurds*.' Robinson's *Calmet*, art. *Ararat*. At the time when Sir Robert Porter published his travels, and indeed till very recently, the summit of this lofty mountain was considered absolutely inaccessible. Several attempts had at different times been made to reach its top, but few persons ever succeeded in getting beyond the limit of perpetual snow. The French traveller Tournefoot, in the year 1700, persevered long in the face of many difficulties, but was foiled in the end. Nearly thirty years since the Pacha of Bayazeed undertook the ascent, but with no better success. The honour was reserved to Dr. Parrot, a German traveller, who in 1829 was the first to tread this towering eminence. For a detailed and interesting account of his ascent see my 'Illustrations of the Scriptures,' p. 14. The fact of such an ascent is however still doubted by the Armenians, but their incredulity is based upon their superstition. They are firmly persuaded that Noah's ark ex-

ists to the present day on the summit of the mountain, and that, in order to preserve it, no person is permitted to approach it. This tradition, founded upon some monkish legend, has received the sanction of the church, and become in effect an article of faith which an Armenian would scarcely renounce, even if he were placed in his own proper person on the very top of the mountain.—But to the opinion that the Ag-ridagh was the resting-place of the ark there are very strong objections both philological and physical; for (1.) The words of the text, 'upon the mountains of Ararat,' are not, in their obvious sense, applicable to a single isolated eminence, like that so denominated. It may indeed be contended that the double peak of Agridagh makes the words pertinent, and that the ark, as Sir R. K. Porter thinks, may have rested in the valley between the two peaks, and thus, as it were, on the two mountains; but to this it may be replied, that since we are told v. 5, that it was not until the tenth month, in the first day of the month, after the waters had decreased continually, that the top of the mountains were seen, it is not possible that the ark should have rested in the valley between the two peaks, and far below their tops, more than two months previously to that period, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, v. 4. The only fair way of understanding the words 'upon the mountains of Ararat,' is in their plain grammatical sense as meaning a mountainous district within a country or province called Ararat, just as we construe the expressions, 'the mountains of Israel,' 'the mountains of Samaria,' 'the mountains of Abarim,' &c. i. e. the mountainous districts of those countries. Compared with general scriptural usage, the phrase, 'mountains of Ararat,' as popularly understood, is as great a violation of correct language as it would be to say in English, 'mountains of

5 And the waters decreased continually, until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first

day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

Alps—of Appenines—of Andes—of Alleganies,' &c. But the phraseology 'mountains of Switzerland—of Spain—of South America, &c. every one recognises as perfectly proper. (2.)

From the account given by all travellers of this double-peaked mountain in Armenia, it is in our view clear that without a positive miracle a large portion of the inmates of the ark could never have descended from the highest of the two summits, and the highest it must have been, if either, for the reasons just stated drawn from a comparison of the two texts, ch. 8. 4 and 5. If to ascend the mountain now is an achievement all but actually transcending human power, and never known to have been accomplished but in a single instance, how can it be believed that camels, horses, elephants, oxen, and other quadrupeds should have been able to make their way down the steep declivities of a precipitous pile of rocks thousands of feet in height? True, indeed, omnipotence could have effected it, and so too it could have saved Noah and his family and the animals without an ark by hemming them all in on dry land by a wall of waters, like that which stood upon the bed of the Red sea when the Israelites were crossing; but as God did not see fit to have recourse to miracles in the first instance, we see not why he should in the second. We know of no reason for resorting to the hypothesis of a miracle, when such an alternative is not necessary; and necessary it certainly is not in the present case, as the Most High, whose counsels guided the motions of the ark, could easily have selected such a spot for its resting as would have afforded a safe and convenient descent to the plain below. And if he could have done this, shall we not suppose that he

would have done it?—On the whole, therefore, we cannot but be conscious that the opinion or tradition which assigns the particular mountain in question as the locality designed by the sacred writer, is liable to very serious objections. In fact, we deem it extremely problematical whether Moses had the least intention of pointing out the particular lodgement of the ark, after the waters began to abate. If we mistake not his object was simply to say in general terms, that this took place in some part of the mountain range which distinguishes the country of Ararat; and that this was either in or very near to the modern Armenia there is good reason to believe. It is easy to imagine, however, that the tradition of the country became attached to this mountain, in preference to the true locality, on account of its conspicuous situation and remarkable appearance. As to the actual spot, the probability is, that although some of the ancient versions seem to point to the Gordiæan mountains, or some part of the chain of Mount Taurus, as the genuine locality, yet that it can only be approximately determined by ascertaining, as nearly as possible, the situation best suited to accomplish the ends which infinite wisdom had in view in reference to the future peopling of the earth, in the selection of the spot for the resting of the ark. As it is quite impossible to lay down in a map any point which can be claimed as the true one, the only means of investigation which can be pursued will be to consider the characters required to be possessed by such a spot, and as this will come in more appropriately in connection with the journeyings of the Noachidæ from the east to the plains of Shinar, ch. 11. 1, 2, the reader

6 ¶ And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened <sup>f</sup> the window of the ark which he had made :

7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

8 Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters

f ch. 6. 16.

is referred to that place for a further discussion of the question.

5. *The waters decreased continually.* Heb. *הָיוּ הַלֶּקֶךְ וְהָסֹר* *were going (or walking) and abating.*—¶ *Were the tops of the mountains seen.* That is, to be seen, visible; for it does not appear that they were *actually* seen by the inmates of the ark, and there was nobody else of whom the act of seeing could be affirmed.

6. *At the end of forty days.* Forty days from the date above mentioned, or the time that the mountain tops became visible.—¶ *Noah opened the window of the ark.* Heb. *הִלָּךְ* *hal-low*, generally interpreted 'window,' but a different word from that occurring ch. 6. 16, and denoting any aperture in the upper part of a building. But what was its precise form or position in the present instance it is impossible to say.—¶ *Which he had made.* The 'which' in this case, according to the Heb. accents, refers not to 'ark' but to 'window.'

7. *Sent forth a raven.* In order to learn whether the waters were abated, as in the case of the sending forth of the dove; for if they were, the raven would have stayed away to feed on dead bodies, according to its natural instincts, Prov. 30. 17. 'Desires of release out of trouble, earnest expectations of it, and inquiries concerning its advances towards us, will very well consist with the sincerity of faith and

were abated from off the face of the ground;

9 But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him in'to the ark; for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

patience.' *Henry.*—¶ *Which went forth to and fro.* Heb. *וְיָצְאוּ וְשָׁבוּ* *which went forth going and returning;* i. e. often flying away from the ark and again returning to it, and resting doubtless on its top. This is rendered both by the Gr. and the Vulg. 'returned not again;' but the meaning of the sacred writer probably is simply that he did not again *re-enter* the ark, as did the dove, v. 9. From the raven's emission and return Noah could of course learn nothing favourable, and from this circumstance, the raven has ever been considered as a bird of ill omèn; while the dove, on the other hand, which brought back an olive-leaf in its beak, is regarded as the significant emblem of peace.

8. *Also he sent forth a dove.* A bird tenderly attached to its mate, and therefore more likely to return. From its being said, v. 10, that he waited 'other seven days,' the inference is natural that the dove was sent out seven days after the raven. In this fact there is a plain intimation, that the weekly sabbath was observed by Noah in the ark.—¶ *To see if the waters were abated.*

Heb. *קִלְקֵל* *were lightened;* a different word from that before rendered 'abated.'

9. *Found no rest for the sole of her foot.* For though some of the mountain tops were bare, yet they were either at so great a distance, or so far out of the course she took, that she did not now alight upon them. Besides, it is



10 And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.

11 And the dove came in to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth *was* an olive-leaf pluckt off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

12 And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the

well known that in general doves fly low and are perhaps on that account called Ezek. 7. 16, 'doves of the valleys,' as ravens also are called 'ravens of the valleys,' Prov. 30. 17, from their usually finding their prey on the low grounds. The vain and weary wanderings of the soul in quest of rest are strikingly shadowed forth in the disappointment of the dove. No solid peace or satisfaction can it find in this deluged, defiling world, till it returns to Christ as to its ark, its Noah. The carnal heart, like the raven, takes up with the world, and feeds on the carrion it finds there, but the gracious soul still sighs out its 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove,' that I might fly to him and be at rest; and, as Trapp remarks, 'if that 'Oh' will not set her at liberty, then she takes up that 'Wo' to express her misery; 'Wo is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar.' Let our language then ever be, 'Return thou to thy rest (Heb. לִמְנוּחַ *limnuah*, to thy Noah, as it were), O my soul!' Ps. 116. 7.—¶ *Returned unto him into the ark.* Rather, 'returned unto him to (אֶל) the ark,' for it was not till after Noah had put forth his hand, and taken hold of her, that she actually entered the ark.—¶ *The waters were on the face of the whole earth.* That is, upon the flat or lower regions in contradistinction from the mountains, the tops of which had previously become visible.—¶ *Pulled.* Heb. יָרָא

dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

13 ¶ And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.

*caused to come.* Genev. Vers. 'received her.'

10. *Stayed.* Heb. 'patiently abode,' the same word that occurs Ps. 40. 1, 'I waited patiently for God.' So in v. 12 below. 'He that believeth shall not make haste.'—¶ *Again he sent.* Heb. 'added to send.' Thus v. 12, 'Returned not again,' Heb. 'added not to return. So also, v. 21, 'Will not again curse,' Heb. 'will not add to curse.'

11. *Came in to him.* Rather came to him, as the original has nothing answering to *in*, and his receiving her into the ark is afterwards mentioned.—¶ *An olive-leaf pluckt off.* Heb. עֵלֶף זֵיתֹן *a newly-pluckt olive-leaf*; or rather olive twig or branch; not a loose leaf floating on the water, but a small tender twig, such as the dove might have broken off with her bill, which she probably did by supernatural impulse. Compare the use of the original phrase Neh. 8. 15, 'Go forth unto the mount and fetch olive-branches (עֵלֶף זֵיתֹן).' According to Pliny and Theophrastus, the olive-tree retains its verdure even under water.—¶ *Abated.* Heb. קָלַר *were lightened.*

13. *Six hundred and first year.* That is, of Noah's life, as the Gr. expressly has it.—¶ *Removed the covering of the ark.* Heb. מִכְסֵּה *mikseh* which occurs Ex. 26. 14.—36. 19, and elsewhere in reference to the covering of skins spread over the tabernacle. It was probably a similar envelope which is spoken of

14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

15 ¶ And God spake unto Noah, saying,

16 Go forth of the ark, & thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

17 Bring forth with thee <sup>h</sup>every living thing that *is* with thee,

g ch. 7. 13. h ch. 7. 15.

of all flesh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and <sup>i</sup> be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him :

1 ch. 1. 22.

here. The Gr. indeed renders it *στέγην* *roof*; as if the meaning were, that Noah now broke up in whole or in part the planking of the roof; but we cannot learn that the original is ever used in that sense. The patient waiting evinced by Noah under these circumstances is worthy of all admiration. Most men in his situation would have been apt to have removed the covering, when the dove returned with the signal of the retiring waters in its mouth; but though the sight of land is always so desirable to the voyager after a long confinement to the walls of a ship, yet Noah discovers no precipitancy, but is calm, moderate, and patient to the end. We must look to the paramount influence of the gracious principle by which he was governed, and to that alone, for an adequate key to his conduct; and let us remember that like causes ever produce like effects.

14. *In the second month, &c. was the earth dried.* The following table will exhibit a tolerably correct calendar of the time of the continuance of the flood and of Noah's abiding in the ark.

A. E. N. M. D.

- |     |    |     |   |
|-----|----|-----|---|
| 600 | 2. | 17. | Noah enters the ark—<br>fountains broken up.                              |
| "   | 3. | 27. | Forty days' rain elapsed—ark borne up and floating.                       |
| "   | 7. | 17. | One hundred and fifty days (including the 40) elapsed—ark begins to rest. |

- |      |     |     |  |
|------|-----|-----|--|
| 600. | 10. | 1.  | Mountain-tops become visible.  |
| "    | 11. | 11. | Raven sent out.  |
| "    | "   | 18. | Dove sent out—returned.  |
| "    | "   | 25. | Dove again sent out—returned.  |
| "    | 12. | 2.  | Dove again sent out—returned not.  |
| "    | "   | 28. | Unaccounted for in the narrative.  |
| 601. | 1.  | 1.  | Waters dried from off the surface—the body of the earth still saturated with moisture. |
| "    | 2.  | 27. | Ground fully dried; Noah leaves the ark.   |

The aggregate is one year and ten days. If, however, as Ainsworth supposes, the Jewish year consisted of only 354 days, six of the 12 months having each 30 days, and the remaining six but 29=354, then by adding 11 days for the 27th of the second month completed, the amount will be 365 days, or a full-solar year.

16. *Go forth of the ark, &c. As* Noah entered the ark by God's command, so he must wait his time ere he attempts to leave it. Though he saw the ground dry the first day of the first month, yet he is required to tarry for nearly two months longer, before he makes his egress from his floating house. 'God consults our benefit, rather than our desires; for he knows what is good for us better than we do ourselves; and how long it is fit our

19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

restraints should continue, and desired mercies be delayed.' *Henry.*

19. *After their kinds.* Heb. 'according to their families.' That is, they rushed not out confusedly together, but in exact order, the several pairs with the increase which may have accrued to them in the ark. *Families* are here attributed to brute creatures, as before *man and wife*, ch. 7. 2.

20. *Builted an altar.* The Heb. term for 'altar,' properly signifies a *sacrificatory*, or *place for slaying sacrifices*. The Eng. word *altar*, comes from the Lat. *altus*, *high*, *elevated*, because they were originally made of high-raised mounds of earth, Ex. 20. 24, or built on the tops of hills and mountains. The 'high places' so frequently mentioned in the subsequent Scriptures, signify either such altars themselves, a kind of *tumuli*, or the eminences on which they were built. As altars and sacrifices were undoubtedly common before the flood as a part of the system of religious worship, Noah had no occasion to wait for a particular command relative to this mode of expressing his gratitude for the signal mercies he had experienced; and it was no doubt of so much more value in the sight of God, as he went about it, 'not of constraint, but willingly.' God is peculiarly pleased with free-will offerings, and with praises spontaneously prompted. And surely if ever an occasion existed for the exercise of grateful and adoring sentiments the present was one. To look back upon the world, and reflect that in so short a space of time all his cotemporaries were blotted from existence,

20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD, and took of <sup>k</sup>every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar.

k Lev. ch. 11.

while he and his little household were now the sole survivors of an extinguished race; to see the whole face of creation so entirely changed, and no trace of former scenes remaining; and then to think of what he owed to the preserving goodness of God, that had kept him safe in the midst of such an awful catastrophe;—all this could not but inspire him with the most melting and overwhelming emotions of thankfulness, which he would naturally make it his first business suitably to express.

—π *Offered burnt-offerings.* Heb. עֲלֶה *ascensions* or *rise-offerings*, so called because they *went up* to the Lord in fire; every part except the skin was consumed; whence they were called in Gr. ὁλοκαυμάτα *whole burnt-offerings*, which the Apostle teaches, Heb. 10. 6, 10, were a prefiguration of the sacrifice of the body of Christ. As to the exact nature of the sacrifice now offered, it probably partook of the twofold character of *eucharistic* and *expiatory*; the *occasion* giving it the one, and the *material* the other; for under the law thank-offerings were not usually of the bloody kind. But in this instance, the offering was probably designed as an *atonement* in behalf of the remnant that was left, and also as a significant testimonial of Noah's believing respect to the Great Sacrifice afterwards to be made, and on the ground of which he would now acknowledge Jehovah's intention to deal with his creatures in all future periods of the renovated earth. The act also is to be viewed in close connection with the covenant engagement mentioned below.

21. *Smelled a sweet savour.* Heb.

21 And the LORD smelled <sup>a</sup> sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again <sup>m</sup> curse the ground any more for

1 Lev. 1. 9. Ezek. 20. 41. 2 Cor. 2. 15. Eph. 5. 2. m ch. 3. 17. & 6. 17.

man's sake; for the <sup>a</sup> imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: <sup>a</sup> neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

n ch. 6. 5. Job 14. 4. & 15. 14. Ps. 51. 5. Jer. 17. 9. Matt. 15. 19. Rom. 1. 21. & 3. 29. o ch. 9. 11, 15.

ריח הניח *savour of rest*; having thus a verbal reference to Noah's name, ch. 5. 29. Chal. 'the Lord accepted with favour his oblation.' Gr. 'the Lord God smelt a savour of sweetness, (σπῆν εὐωδίας.).' The meaning is, that Noah's sacrifice was as grateful and acceptable to the Lord as sweet odours are to a man. Thus 1 Sam. 26. 19, 'If the Lord have stirred thee up against me let him accept (Heb. ריח *smell*) an offering.' Lev. 26. 31, 'I will not *smell* the savour of your sweet odours;' i. e. I will reject your sacrifices. In order however that sacrifices should be thus acceptable to Jehovah it was requisite both that they should conform to his appointment, and that the offerer should be himself a believer, and should present them in faith of the great atonement of the Messiah; as otherwise instead of coming up as fragrant odours before the Lord, they should be to him as a nauseous smell which he abhorred; 'I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not *smell* in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.' Am. 5. 21, 22. That the sacrifice of Noah on this occasion prefigured that of Christ is evident from the words of Paul Eph. 5. 2, 'Who hath loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a *sweet smelling savour* (σπῆν εὐωδίας);' where the phrase used by the apostle is the very phrase used by the Septuagint in this place.—¶ *The Lord said in his heart.* Heb. אל לבו *to his heart*;

i. e. to himself; he inwardly determined. Another meaning, but one less probable, may be that 'the Lord spake to his (Noah's) heart;' i. e. the Lord comforted him, as the phrase sometimes implies, Jud. 19. 3. Ruth 2. 13. Is. 40. 2. Hos. 2. 14. Thus too the Arab. 'God said to his prophet.' But on the contrary the Syr. 'the Lord said in his heart.' Chal. 'the Lord said in (or by) his word.' Gr. 'and the Lord God considering said,' which last undoubtedly gives the true sense. The expression is perhaps equivalent to an oath; the very one, it may be, to which God alludes by the prophet, Is. 54. 9, 'For as I *have sworn* that the waters of Noah should no more govern the earth,' &c. We know of no other time but this when this *swearing* can be supposed to have occurred.—¶ *Will not again curse the ground.* Heb. 'will not add to curse;' i. e. as I have done now, by a general deluge. The words are to be considered not as canceling the general curse inflicted upon the earth for man's sin, Gen. 3. 17, nor as precluding a future destruction by fire, but simply as declaring that the judgment of a universal deluge shall not be repeated, though there might still be partial inundations in particular regions that would be marked by very desolating effects.—¶ *For the imagination of man's heart, &c.* Rather, Heb. כי, though the imagination (or fabrication, יצר), &c. Thus Josh. 17. 13, 'Thou shalt drive out the Canaanites though (כי) they have iron chariots.' As if he should say, 'Notwithstanding I see man's heart is still the same as

22 <sup>p</sup> While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, <sup>q</sup> and day and night, shall not cease.

p Is. 54. 8. q Jer. 33. 20, 25.

before the flood, yet will I no more destroy the earth on that account; but, looking to the atoning sacrifice of the promised Messiah, I will spare them and bless them for his sake.'

22. *While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, &c.* Six divisions of the natural year are here mentioned; and it seems that the Jews adopted the same divisions of the seasons, in reference to the labours of agriculture, which formed the principal employment of the mass of the population. The same divisions are still in use among the Arabs. The promise is clearly *general* in its import, and therefore partial failures are not inconsistent with it.

#### CHAPTER IX.

The deliverance of the earth from the dominion of the overflowing waters was a sort of second creation. Noah and his sons accordingly were introduced into the possession and lordship of this new empire with very nearly the same form of benediction as that which was bestowed upon Adam at the beginning. The prerogatives of Noah were indeed enlarged beyond those of Adam by the grant of animal food, but like the first father of the race he receives an assurance of blessing and a command to be fruitful, to multiply, and to replenish the earth. In connection with this he is formally invested with a renewed dominion over the creatures, and comforted with the assurance that the earth should not again be destroyed by a like catastrophe. But in order to gain a still fuller view of the scope of the opening part of this chapter, we must revert to the circumstances, in which

#### CHAPTER IX.

AND God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, <sup>a</sup> Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

a ch. 1. 28. ver. 7, 19. ch. 10, 32.

the new charter of privileges was conferred upon him. The true clew to the scope of the first paragraph is contained in the first and seventh verses by which it is limited, and which it will be perceived are of equivalent import, both containing the command, or the promise rather, of an abundant increase. But to the accomplishment of such a promise the history of the past and the view of the present would suggest very formidable obstacles to the mind of Noah. The sole survivors of the former world were now but a feeble handful, and a natural ground of apprehension was, that in their weakness they would not be able to cope with the beasts of the field, who might soon be more than able to dispute the mastery with the adult infants issuing from the second cradle of the human race. To obviate the apprehensions arising from this source, God is pleased, in the first instance, to assure them that he would henceforth so impress the spirits of the brute creation with a fear and dread of man that, as a general fact, they might promise themselves abundant security on this score, and not only so, but by giving them permission to kill the animals for food, they should have a still farther guaranty of safety, as they would in this way be imposing a continual check upon their too rapid increase. But the depredations and ferocity of wild beasts were not all that Noah and his family would feel that they had reason to fear. The wrathful passions of men as well as the destructive instincts of animals were to be dreaded. Societies in a state of lawless misrule marked by deeds of violence and blood had no



2 <sup>b</sup> And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea;

b ch. 1. 28. Hos. 2. 18.

doubt been common before the flood, and how natural was it for Noah to give way to the fear that like scenes of cruelty, rapine, and murder would interfere with the promise now given of the plentiful increase of his seed? But here too the Lord meets his misgivings with a quieting assurance. He utters an edict against the shedder of man's blood which would at once erect a barrier against the inroad of evils otherwise to be anticipated from this source, and so having fully obviated these two grand tacit objections to the fulfilment of the gracious promise, he again repeats in v. 7, the benediction which he had first announced in v. 1, 'Be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply therein;' all the intermediate matter between these two verses being apparently introduced for the sole purpose of removing the objections above stated.

2. *The fear of you, &c.* In these words is pointed out a striking difference in the nature of the dominion which was exercised over the brute creation by Adam in innocence and by Noah after the flood. Previous to the fall, man ruled the inferior animals by *love* and *kindness*, as then *gentleness* and *docility* were their principal characteristics. After that event, untractableness, savage ferocity, and enmity to man, prevailed among almost all orders of the animal tribes; and had not God in his mercy impressed them with the *fear* and *terror* of man, so that some *submit* to his will, while others *flee* from his abodes, the human

into your hand are they delivered.

3 <sup>c</sup> Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the <sup>d</sup> green herb have I given you <sup>e</sup> all things.

c Deut. 12. 15. & 14. 3, 9, 11. Acts 10. 12, 13.  
d ch. 1. 29. e Rom. 14. 14, 20. 1 Cor. 10. 23, 26.  
Col. 2. 16. 1 Tim. 4. 3, 4.

race would probably long ere this have been destroyed by the beasts of the field. It is *ordinarily* but little considered what mercy God has shown to man in hiding from even the domestic animals the consciousness of their superior strength.—It is not to be inferred from the language of this passage that the *same degree* of the fear of man was impressed upon all the different species of animals; but that even the fiercest and most powerful possess more or less of it is certain. It is the instinct even of the lion, the tiger, and the wild elephant in ordinary circumstances and when not provoked, rather to flee from man than to attack him; thus acknowledging the majesty of his presence and the fact of his original lordship. This passage seems to be alluded to in James 3. 7, 'For every kind (Gr. *φύσις* nature) of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed *of mankind* (Gr. *φύσει ἀνθρώπων* by the human nature);' i. e. the nature of the one is constitutionally subject to the nature of the other.

3. *Every moving thing that lieth.* Heb. *רמש* *creeping thing*. From the peculiar emphasis of the original the words would seem to imply, that the animals allowed for food *were to be killed* for this purpose, and that such as died of themselves, or were slain by other beasts, were excluded from the grant. This was afterwards expressly prescribed in the law; Lev. 22. 8, 'That which dieth of itself, or is torn with beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself therewith.' Such general expressions

4 <sup>f</sup> But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require: <sup>g</sup> at the

<sup>f</sup> Lev. 17. 10, 11, 14. & 19. 26. Deut. 12. 23. 1 Sam. 14. 34. Acts 15. 20, 29. <sup>g</sup> Ex. 21. 28.

as that here used are often to be understood with some exceptions, and the fact that certain species of reptiles were afterwards forbidden to be eaten, Lev. 11, is not to be constructed as militating with the drift of this passage.—

¶ *Even as the green herb have I given you all things.* Alluding to the primitive grant made Gen. 1. 29. The whole scope makes it evident that the use of animal food is here spoken of not as an injunction, but as a permission.

4. *But flesh with the life thereof, &c.*

Heb. אֲךָ בָּשָׂר בְּנַפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ *only flesh with the life (or soul) thereof, the blood thereof, ye shall not eat.* It is

to be noticed, however, that according to the distinction of the Heb. accents which, though not infallible guides to the sense, are always entitled to respect as giving the readings of the ancient Jews, this verse in connection with the preceding requires to be rendered and pointed as follows: 'As the green herb have I given you all, (all kinds of animals for food, yet not all parts of the animal alike, but) only the flesh: the life thereof, (which is) the blood thereof, ye shall not eat.' According to this construction, which we have little doubt is the true one, the preposition בְּ before נַפְשׁ *life* serves both to designate the accusative of the object, as it does repeatedly after this very verb אָכַל *to eat* (Ex. 12. 43—45. Lev. 22. 11), and also to point out the *internal nature* and *quality* of the subject to which it applies, and its *virtual identity* with the blood. It cannot perhaps be positively affirmed that Moses here intended to assert the physiological fact, that the blood is the seat

hand of every beast will I require it, and <sup>h</sup> at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 4. 9, 10. Ps. 9. 12. 1 Acts 17. 26.

of vitality in the animal structure. He may have designed simply to convey the idea that the blood was *ostensibly* the grand medium of life, that upon which its continuance more especially depended; yet it is not a little remarkable that the discoveries of the celebrated John Hunter in the middle of the last century have gone far to establish the point, that the blood is strictly a *vital fluid*, and is, in this respect, distinguished from every other part of the animal economy. But upon this view of the subject we cannot here enlarge.—As to the true scope of the passage, the Hebrew doctors generally understand it as a prohibition against cutting off any limb of a living animal and eating it while the life, i. e. the life-blood, is in it. Maimonides speaks of a fierce and barbarous people, who after cutting pieces of flesh from a living animal, devoured it raw with the blood streaming from it, as a part of their idolatrous worship; and that this horrid practice is kept up to this day among the Abyssinians is placed beyond the reach of controversy by the reports of Mr. Bruce and Mr. Salt, confirmed by the statements of a still later traveller, Mr. Madden, whose relations on this subject may be seen in my 'Illustrations of the Scriptures,' p. 17. But this, though perhaps indirectly involved in the spirit of the prohibition, does not seem to be its primary drift. This was undoubtedly to forbid the use of blood in its simple unmixed state as an article of diet, and for this the grand reason is to be sought, not so much from its tendency to beget a cruel, ferocious, and blood-thirsty dis

position, though such is the fact, as from the design of the Lawgiver to attach to blood a peculiar sacredness from its uses in religious worship. This we find expressly declared Lev. 17. 10, 11, 'Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.' The full force of this language cannot be appreciated without bearing in mind that the original word (נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*) or *life* and *soul* is the same; so that in saying that the *life* of the flesh is in the blood, and that it is the blood that makes atonement for the *soul* (i. e. the *life*), it is virtually said that *life* goes for *life* in the great scheme of expiation. Accordingly we find it prophetically affirmed of Christ in undoubted allusion to this very language, Is. 53. 12, that he should pour out his *soul* (Heb. נֶפֶשׁ Gr. ψυχή) unto death; i. e. should shed his vital blood, give his life. The same original Greek term occurs John, 10. 11, 17, 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his *life* (or soul—ψυχή) for the sheep.' As to the question whether this precept of abstaining from blood be at present binding upon Christians, see Barnes on Acts 15. 29.

5. *And surely your blood of your lives will I require.* God having in the preceding verses given security to Noah and his posterity against any apprehended obstacle to their increase and multiplication from the ravages of wild beasts, comes now to make provision against another possible evil, viz. the violence of men towards each other. Noah, from his experience of the past, would no doubt fear that the effects of the divine blessing would be in

danger of being counteracted from this source, and the Most High accordingly here utters a decree well calculated to allay his apprehensions. The phraseology of the original is very peculiar, and our translation we think fails in giving its precise import. The Heb. for 'your blood of your lives' (דְּמַמְכֶם לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם) perhaps more properly signifies 'your blood *for* your lives;' i. e. your blood in return for the life-blood which you have shed. He says 'for *your* lives,' to intimate the close relation and identity, as it were, between men, as if in taking away the life of a brother they took that which was their own; so representing *homicide* as but another form of *suicide*, for he 'hath made of *one* blood all nations of men,' &c. Acts, 17. 26. The term *require* (אָדָרַשׁ) implies a *vindictive seeking* or *searching out*, and consequently involves the idea of *punishment*. Thus Gen. 42. 22, 'Therefore behold also his *blood is required*.' For this reason God is called Ps. 9. 12 (13), דָּרֵשׁ דְּמָיִם *seeker out of bloods*, i. e. avenger; and when Moses says Deut. 18. 19, 'I will *require* it of him,' Peter in quoting and applying the sentence, Acts, 3. 23, says, 'He shall be *destroyed* from among the people.'—וְאֵת יָדוֹ אֶתְּחַבֵּר *At the hand of every beast will I require it*. This is generally interpreted of the punishment which was to be inflicted upon a beast that had in any way killed a man; and it is certain that a law was afterwards ordained requiring such a beast to be put to death, Ex. 21. 28, probably to inspire greater horror of every species of bloodshedding. And this may be the primary and most genuine sense of the words. At least, we would not exclude it from the scope of the sacred writer; at the same time we cannot avoid the impression that this does not exhaust the whole meaning of the words. The phrase 'at the hand of' sometimes signifies 'by means of;' and a secondary idea, we are persuaded, is,

that the shedding of human blood should be avenged by the *agency or instrumentality*, not only of every murdered man's brother, but even by that of the very beasts of the field. The whole creation, as it were, should be armed against him who had violated the sanctity of human life. It is probable indeed that this ordinance contemplated primarily a state of society in which the institution of laws and magistracy had obtained but a very imperfect establishment, and therefore amounts to a pledge on the part of the Most High that he would in some way, and by the employment of such ministers as he saw fit, take the work of vengeance into his own hands. How agreeable such extraordinary judgments were to the general sense of mankind we may learn from the striking incident Acts, 28. 4, where the barbarians, when they observed the viper (the venomous *beast*) hanging to the hand of Paul, at once concluded that the man was a murderer, whom, though he had escaped the perils of the sea, justice would not suffer to live. In like manner in the book of Job, which contains a picture of society in its earliest and rudest stages, we find clear intimations of the same thing. Speaking of the favoured lot of the good man it is said, ch. 5. 22, 23, 'At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh; *neither shall thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.* For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; *and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.*' While, therefore, we admit that the phrase 'to require the blood at the hand of beast or brother,' implies primarily inflicting vengeance on the perpetrator, it involves also the secondary sense of *enlisting* such executioners in the work as to divine wisdom might seem good. This is confirmed by what follows.—¶ *At the hand of every man's brother will I require it.* Chal. 'At the hand of the man who shall spill his brother's blood

will I require the soul (or life) of man.' That the idea here expressed is really conveyed by the words of the sacred writer we are not disposed to question; nor that they carry with them the clear implication that every man is to consider every other man as his brother, and to be as tender of his life as he would be of that of one who acknowledges the same *immediate* parents as himself. But the passage contains, we conceive, much more than this. We here see, if we mistake not, the origin of the institution of *Goëllism*, or that feature of the patriarchal polity which provided for the punishment of crimes of blood. By the Goël (גוֹל *goël*) is to be understood the nearest relation of a person murdered, whose right and duty it was, to avenge his kinsman's death with his own hand. The etymology of the word in this sense is not very well ascertained, but as the root גוֹל has the import not only of *ransoming* or *redeeming*, but also of *polluting* or *staining*, Michaelis suggests that the Goël was so called from his being considered as *stained* with the blood of his murdered relative till he had washed it away by avenging his death; and in this very light do the Arabs still regard the kinsman of a person murdered. The term, however, was afterwards extended to signify the nearest relation in general, although there was no murder in the case, as may be seen in the notes on Ruth, 4. 1. In Arabic, this personage is called *Tair* or *T'sair*, i. e. *survivor*, implying the surviving relative, who was bound to avenge the death of a murdered person; and in the writings of this people the mention of the blood-avenger occurs far oftener than it does in Hebrew; no doubt for the reason, that the usages of a rude and primitive state of society have left more permanent traces among them than among the Hebrews, though even among them the relics of this system of retribution are still discoverable in

6 \* Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

k Ex. 21. 12, 14. Lev. 24. 17. Matt. 26. 52. Rev. 13. 10. 1 ch. 1. 27.

the laws respecting the cities of refuge, Deut. 19. The following remarks of Michaelis on the subject of Goëllism will make the reader still better acquainted with its nature and design. 'Let us figure to ourselves a people without magistrates, and where every father of a family is still his own master. In such a state men's lives would of necessity be in the highest degree insecure, were there no such blood-avenger as we have above described. Magistrate, or public judicial tribunal, to punish murder, there is none; of course acts of murder might be daily perpetrated, were there no reason to dread punishment of another description. For their own security, the people would be forced to constitute the avengement of blood an indispensable duty, and not only to consider the murderer as an outlaw, but actually to endeavour to put him to death, and whithersoever he might flee, never to cease pursuing him until he became the victim of vengeance. As, however, every one would not choose to undertake the dangerous office of thus avenging a murder, the nearest relations of the unfortunate sufferer would find it necessary to undertake it themselves. It would naturally be deemed a noble deed, and the neglect of it, of course, highly disgraceful and justly productive of such infamy and reproach as blood alone could wash away.' *Comment. on Laws of Moses*, vol. 2. p. 195. It is, we suppose, to such a *provisional expedient* as this that the words before us refer, one which God was pleased to sanction for the time being till more perfect systems of laws and government should be introduced among men; as it is evident

7 And you, <sup>m</sup> be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

m ver. 1, 19. & ch. 1. 28.

that such a means of severity is liable to great abuses, and could never be so effectual nor so free from objections, as the laws by which a magistrate punishes a murderer after instituting a judicial investigation of his guilt. Still we can easily see that it might have been adopted in those early ages as a *temporary expedient of Providence*, though not perhaps appointed as a *positive divine institution* carrying with it the express authority of Heaven. God in his providence often avails himself of many things which at the same time exist rather by his *sufferance* than by his *approbation*.

6. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, &c.* That is, wilfully and unwarrantably, for there are two exceptions to this law, (1.) Casual or unintentional murder, Deut. 19. 4. (2.) Death by the hand of the magistrate for capital crimes, to which the present rule has direct reference. The enactment contained in the preceding verse has, as we have endeavoured to show, a leading reference to the rude and less organized states of society, where the punishment of flagrant crimes, particularly that of murder, would devolve more immediately upon the avenging interpositions of God's providence. The drift of that verse accordingly is to convey the assurance that he would actually take it upon him to see to the maintaining of the interests of justice among his creatures in the lack of those institutions which would otherwise enable them to do it. But in the present passage, we consider the divine Law-giver as having his eye upon a somewhat different and higher state of political society. Instead of being a mere



8 ¶ And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

9 And I, <sup>a</sup> behold, I establish

n ch. 6. 18.

▪ my covenant with you, and with your seed after you ;

o Is. 54. 9.

repetition of the leading idea of the former verse, the words seem to carry with them the implication of the existence of law and settled government, and that their prominent drift is to invest the magistrate with a divine warrant for inflicting capital punishment upon the wilful murderer. This will probably be still more evident from what follows.—¶ *By man shall his blood be shed.* Chal. 'With witnesses by the sentence of the judges shall his blood be shed.' The welfare of society evidently requires that capital punishments should be inflicted, not by the stroke of private revenge, but by the arm of the authorized magistrate, and through the medium of a judicial sentence, Rom. 13. 1. This ordinance, therefore, may be considered as a virtual institution of magistracy, which perhaps affords us the most legitimate interpretation of the clause; 'for in the image of God made he man,' i. e. in the constitution of civil society, as emanating from the will of the Most High, men are to be appointed as the executive organs of the social body for the administration of justice; and a magistrate thus armed with authority bears a visible impress of the Divine image in the legal sovereignty with which he is invested. Still this sense need not exclude the usual construction, that a murderer obliterates the image of his Maker in the extinction of human life, and therefore deserves to die. This is in itself true, and may perhaps be intended to be taught in the genuine import of the verse, though the former is its more legitimate scope. It is indeed sometimes maintained that this sentence is to be understood, not as a precept authorizing capital punishments,

but merely as a *prediction*, intimating that the murderer will usually die a violent death. But such a consequence would follow the commission of this crime only as the result of the ordering of Divine Providence, and the course of Providence is but another name for the expression of the will of God; so that it virtually amounts to the same thing, whether we consider it as a *prediction* or a *precept*.—¶ *For in the image of God made he man.* In addition to what is said above, it may be well in this connection to remark that the celebrated Belgic commentator, Venema, has proposed the following rendering of these words, which he labours to support with great acuteness and ingenuity, viz. 'whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, *although* in the image of God created he him;' i. e. the fact of his bearing the image of his Maker is to constitute no impediment in the way of the sentence of death being pronounced and executed upon the murderer. He supposes the words to be virtually a reply to the tacit objection, that inasmuch as the image of God is common to all men, and in all is to be held sacred and inviolable, therefore the putting to death a murderer was as real an invasion and extinction of this image as was the act of the culprit himself, and so was unlawful. But this scruple is directly met and removed in these words by the divine declaration, that this circumstance is not to be allowed to prevent the execution of the appointed sentence. That the literal rendering of the original will admit this construction there is no doubt, for we have already shown that such is the true import of the Heb. *כִּי* for in ch.

10 <sup>p</sup> And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

11 And <sup>q</sup> I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither

p Ps. 145. 9. q Is. 54. 9.

8. 21, to which numerous other instances might be added. But still from a view of the whole context we prefer the interpretation given above, which makes the image of God here to consist in *man's representing his Maker in the exercise of authority and the administration of justice.*

9. *I establish my covenant with you.* Heb. בְּרִיתִי *berithi*. A covenant, as remarked in the note on Gen. 6. 18, usually signifies a *mutual compact*, but here, as occasionally elsewhere, it imports mainly a *solemn promise*. It is merely an amplification of what was said at the altar, where the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and indeed the first seventeen verses of this chapter are a continuation of that subject. The goodness of God in this transaction is very remarkable. As man has no claims upon his Maker, he might have determined to exempt the world from the calamity of a second deluge, and yet not have acquainted them with his purpose. But he was pleased in this instance, as in many others, to lay himself under voluntary engagements with his creatures, that they might know how gracious he is, and be encouraged to serve him with more lively gratitude. Knowing that the severe judgment which he had inflicted upon the human race would, for a time at least, strike terror into succeeding generations, and perhaps deter them from cultivating the earth, he here, in order

shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

12 And God said, <sup>r</sup> This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations.

13 I do set <sup>s</sup> my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

r ch. 17. 11. s Rev. 4. 3.

to set their minds at rest on this score, gives Noah an assurance that he would never again destroy all his creatures with a flood, and this promise he has himself taught us to consider in the light of an oath. Is. 54. 9, 'For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.' Thus also he deals with us in his Son. Being willing that the heirs of promise should have strong consolation, he confirms his word by an oath, Heb. 6. 17, 18.

11. *Neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth.* Heb. כְּתֹחַ *to corrupt*. This has the air of being a mere repetition of what is said just before, but by referring to ch. 6. 13, it appears that there was a twofold threatening, viz. against 'all flesh' and against 'the earth;' so here is a corresponding twofold promise.

12. *This is the token of the covenant which I make, &c.* Heb. אֶתָּה *a sign*. On the import of this word see note on Gen. 4. 15.—¶ *Every living creature that is with you.* Because the benefits of this covenant were to extend to all the animal creation, as well as to man, for whose sake they were created. Every living thing, not excepting even the meanest reptiles, was interested in it; so comprehensive is the beneficence of Heaven. The phrase 'with you,

which is repeated so often in this connection, is very emphatic and points to the exceedingly intimate relation constituted by the Creator between man and the lower orders of creatures.

13. *I do set my bow in the cloud.* That is, in the clouds; collect. sing. for plur. The original word for *set* (נָתַתִּי *nathatti*), usually rendered *to give*, has in innumerable instances the import of *appointing* or *constituting*, as Num. 14. 4, 'Let us make (נָתַתִּי) a captain, and let us return into Egypt;' i. e. let us appoint a captain. 1 Kings 2. 35, 'The king put (נָתַתִּי) Benaiah over the host; and Zadok did the king put (נָתַתִּי) in the room of Abiathar;' i. e. appointed. So in the preceding verse 'the token of the covenant which I make (נָתַתִּי),' is properly 'the token of the covenant which I appoint.' As the rainbow is the natural effect of the refraction and reflection of the sun's rays falling on drops of water, it is not absolutely necessary to suppose that this phenomenon had never been witnessed previous to the time now mentioned. As the causes of it existed from the beginning, it *may* have occasionally appeared in the interval between the creation and the deluge; and all that is here implied *may* be that it was *now* first appointed as a pledge or outward visible sign of the covenant promise made to Noah. Yet we incline upon the whole to regard this as the first appearance of the celestial arch. Such we think is the natural impression produced upon the mind of any one who reads the narrative without reference to any existing theory upon the subject; and no one can doubt that the effect upon Noah's mind would have been far more vivid and striking had this been the first time the splendid sight had met his eye. Although the *causes* of the phenomenon existed from the creation, yet it does not necessarily follow that the *phenomenon itself* had actually appeared before. Even now there is

not always a rainbow when there is rain, and God might have prevented its occurrence from a foresight of the moral uses to which he designed to have it applied after the flood. The grand import which God intended to convey by this sign was that of *assurance of security* against the occurrence of another deluge, and had not the phenomenon been new, had men been familiar with it in past ages, it is not altogether easy to see how it could have been efficacious enough to overcome the doubts and fears which it was intended to remove. 'What guaranty does this afford us,' they might say, 'that we shall not be deluged again, since we have often beheld this sight, and were deluged notwithstanding?' If it be said that God's verbal promise made their security certain, we may ask what need then was there of any outward sign at all? Was not his word as certain without a sign as with it? In fine, as it is impossible to prove that the rainbow had actually ever appeared before the flood, we believe the most interesting light in which this glorious spectacle can be viewed, viz. as a great memento of the divine veracity, has been *conceded away* to the cavils of infidels; and that by looking upon it merely as an effect of natural causes that have *always* operated, we shall be apt to lose the force of its moral bearing in connection with the event in which it originated. As a seal of this gracious assurance it is very peculiar. Its beauty, conspicuousness and grandeur make it a very suitable memorial for such a purpose, and yet whenever a rainbow appears, it is a sign that there is rain descending at that moment on the earth, and consequently when viewed in itself is rather a ground of apprehending that another deluge may come. But God in his wisdom has chosen that to be a pledge of our security which is in itself an intimation of our danger. And how strikingly does the Most High endeavor

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud :

15 And <sup>u</sup> I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16 And the bow shall be in the

<sup>u</sup> Ex. 23. 12. Lev. 26. 42, 45. Ezek. 16. 60.

his goodness to our hearts by appointing a sign which he declares shall not only be a means of reminding *us*, but *himself* also, of his promise! 'I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant.'

14. *When I bring a cloud over the earth.* Heb. בענני ענן *when I make cloudy (the) cloud.* That is, clouds, thick watery clouds, a collective term; whence the Gr. 'when I bring clouds (*νεφελας*).'

15. *The waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.* It is now above four thousand years since the promise was given to Noah, and no part of it has ever yet failed. There have been partial inundations and partial suspensions of fruitful seasons; but at no period, from the deluge to this hour, has any thing occurred like the desolation that was visited upon the earth in the days of Noah. The conscious security in which the world reposes, as far as the occurrence of another deluge is concerned, is matter of devout admiration and perpetual praise. And so will it doubtless appear if due weight be given to the reflections of Calvin on this fearful catastrophe. 'The earth,' says he, 'in its primitive and most natural state was covered by the waters; and it was owing solely to the singular beneficence of the Creator that they were forced to give way and leave a space fit for the occupation of anima-

cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember <sup>w</sup> the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

17 And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

<sup>w</sup> ch. 17. 13, 19.

ted beings. And this the philosophers are obliged to confess, that the subsidence of the waters below the surface of the earth so as to allow any portion of it to rise above them, is an event *contrary to nature* (*præter naturam*). Indeed, the Scriptures speak of it as among the divine miracles, Job 38. 8—11, that the waters of the sea should be kept back by *forced restraints*, as of bars and doors, from rushing forth and overwhelming the regions allotted to the habitation of men.' *Comment. on Gen. 7. 11.* Considering therefore the *real* exposedness of the earth to destruction from the element of water on the one hand and fire on the other, vast stores of which are treasured up in its bowels and continually *tending* to burst forth, we may well regard our safety as the effect of a perpetual miracle of mercy; and every appearance of a rainbow ought to be a signal for a new acknowledgment of the divine forbearance and faithfulness. Such according to Maimonides was the custom of the ancient Jews;—'When any one seeth the bow in the cloud, he blesseth God that remembereth his covenant, and is faithful therein, and stable in his promise.' *Ainsworth.* 'Look upon the rainbow, and praise him that made it,' says the son of Syrac, Ecclus. 43. 11, and to this injunction every pious heart will promptly respond.

17. *And God said unto Noah, this*

18 ¶ And the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: <sup>z</sup>and Ham is the father of Canaan.

x ch. 10. 6.

*is the token, &c.* The remark of Jarchi the Jewish commentator on this passage we think peculiarly plausible and happy. He says that in what goes before God had merely affirmed, in a general way, that he *would* appoint the bow in the heavens as a sign of the covenant, and that whenever it should *in future* chance to appear it should be so regarded, while there is no intimation that one was actually visible at the time. But now, he thinks, for the greater confirmation of Noah's faith, God suddenly overspread the western sky with clouds, and causing the rainbow to appear, said to his servant, 'Behold, *this* is the sign of which I spake!' Such at any rate is the usual force of the demonstrative *זאת* *this*.

18. *The sons of Noah—were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth.* To whatever it may be owing, the fact is undoubted, that very many of the names of the early distinguished personages of Scripture are not only significant, but significant some way of the character or fortunes for which the individuals themselves were remarkable. Whether these names were bestowed by their parents under some degree of prophetic influence, as suggested on Gen. 4. 2.—5. 29, or whether the original names were gradually superseded and other appropriate ones substituted by their posterity in after times, is uncertain. That the fact is so, however, the names of Noah's sons afford one of many palpable proofs. 'Shem' signifies *name*, and doubtless points to the circumstance of his *superior distinction* over his brethren, especially from his being the progenitor of Him who inherits a

19 <sup>y</sup> These *are* the three sons of Noah: <sup>z</sup> and of them was the whole earth overspread.

20 And Noah began to be <sup>a</sup> a

y ch. 5. 32. z ch. 10. 32. 1 Chron. 1. 4, &c.  
a ch. 3. 19, 23. ~~4.~~ 4. 2. Prov. 12. 11.

*name that is above every name.* 'Ham' signifies *heat*, probably in allusion to the hot and sultry regions which his descendants were to inhabit. Of 'Japheth' the import is *enlargement*, the grounds of which appellation are explained below. We may remark, moreover, that the *order of mention* here does not correspond with the *order of age*; for Japheth was undoubtedly the eldest and Shem the youngest of the three brethren. But Shem is usually mentioned first because the birthright was conferred upon him.—¶ *Ham is the father of Canaan.* Heb. כנען *Kanaan*, from the root כנע *kāna*, to *humble*, to *depress*, to *cause to stoop* or *bow down*; implying the *depressive humiliation* to which his descendants should be subjected. This remark of Moses respecting Ham was doubtless made with a special design; for living, as he did, when the Israelites, who descended from Shem, were about to take possession of the land of Canaan, it was of peculiar importance that they should be informed, that the people, whose country the Lord their God had given them to possess, were under a curse from the days of their first father. As Ham had several sons besides Canaan, there seems to be no other assignable reason for *his* being particularly specified here than that now suggested.

19. *Of them was the whole earth overspread.* Heb. נפצוה *dispersed, scattered*; spoken of the earth figuratively, unless as some critics understand it, 'earth' is here used in the sense of *inhabitants of the earth*, the container for the contained. The ancient versions



husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: <sup>b</sup> and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

21 And he drank of the wine,

<sup>b</sup> Prov. 20. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 12.

all give an equivalent rendering, though the Syr. includes both senses;—‘From these were men divided in the earth.’ The fact mentioned would seem to exclude the idea that Noah had any more children born after the flood, as some have maintained.

20. *Noah began to be a husbandman.*

Heb. אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה *a man of the ground.* Thus in the Heb. idiom a soldier is termed ‘a man of war;’ a shepherd, ‘a man of cattle;’ an orator, ‘a man of words,’ &c. The language does not necessarily imply that he had not followed the occupation of a husbandman before. The original for ‘begin’ both in Heb. and Gr. is often redundant, being applied to one who continues or repeats an action begun before. Thus, Christ is said, Mark, 11. 15, to ‘begin to cast out,’ and Luke, 12. 1, to ‘begin to speak,’ for which in the parallel places he is said only, Mat. 21. 12, to ‘cast out,’ and Mat. 16. 6, to ‘speak.’ So likewise it is said Gen. 6. 1, ‘when men began to multiply,’ though we know they had multiplied before this, and were already very numerous. Here then the meaning is simply, that Noah began to cultivate the ground after the deluge and, among other agricultural operations, he planted a vineyard, and was perhaps the first who invented presses for extracting the juice of the grape and making wine in this manner. If so, the increased quantities procured, or the augmented strength of the beverage, may account for the effect produced by drinking it upon Noah. ‘Behold the juice of the grape in a new state; possessing a quality unheard of before. Eaten from the tree, or dried in the sun, it is simple and nutritious, like the grain from the stalk of corn; pressed out and fermented, it acquires a

fiery force, it warms the blood, it mounts to the brain, it leads reason captive, it overpowers every faculty, it triumphs over its lord. How often have arts been invented which have proved fatal to the inventors!’ *Hunter.*

21. *And he drank of the wine and was drunken.* This language is, alas! too plain to stand in need of expository comment. He that runs may read, and he that reads must grieve. It was very lawful for Noah to partake of the fruits of his labour; but he sinned in drinking to excess. He might not indeed have been aware of the strength of the wine, or his age might have rendered him sooner affected by it. At any rate, we have reason to conclude from his general character, that it was a fault of inadvertence, one in which he was overtaken, and of which he afterwards bitterly repented. ‘Who would look to have found righteous Noah, the father of the new world, lying drunk in his tent? Who could think that wine should overthrow him that was preserved from the waters? That he who could not be tainted with the sinful examples of the former world should begin the example of a new sin of his own? What are we men if we be left to ourselves! While God upholds us, no temptation can move us; when he leaves us, no temptation is too weak to overthrow us. God’s best children have no fence for sins of infirmity. Which of the saints have not once done that whereof they are ashamed? Yet we see Noah drunken but once. One act can no more make a good man unrighteous, than a trade of sin can stand (consist) with regeneration.’ *Bp. Hall.*—¶ *Was uncovered within his tent.* Heb. בְּתוֹךְ אֹהֶלָה *in the midst of (the) tent;* the original having nothing

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 ° And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father: and their fa-

c Ex. 20. 12. Gal. 6. 1.

to answer to 'his' in our translation. Indeed the use of the collect. sing. is of such incessant occurrence in Hebrew, that it is by no means certain that a *single tent* is here intended. It may be that he lay on the ground in the open air in the midst of a number of tents, where he happened first to be discovered by Ham. Thus while in 2 Sam. 7. 6, God says, 'Whereas I have not dwelt in (any) house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle,' i. e. have dwelt tentwise; we read in the parallel passage 1 Chron. 17. 5, 'For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent and from (one) tabernacle (to another).' As to Ham's telling his brethren *without*, this may mean simply that he told them in the fields or in the vineyards, or any where *without* the spot where the several tents happened to be pitched. But whatever were the place, it was the position that constituted the degradation. 'Noah had no sooner sinned but he discovers his nakedness, and hath not so much rule of himself as to be ashamed. One hour's drunkenness bewrays that which more than six hundred years' sobriety had modestly concealed. He that gives himself to wine is not his own: what shall we think of this vice, which robs a man of himself and lays a beast in his room?' *Bp. Hall.*

14\*

ces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25 And he said, ° Cursed be Canaan; ° a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

d Deut. 27. 16. Josh. 9. 23. 1 Kings, 2. 20, 21.

22. *And Ham*—saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren. However sinful it was for Noah thus to expose himself, it was still more so for Ham, on perceiving his situation, to go out and report it with malignant pleasure to his brethren. For that he did so, we cannot but infer from the sequel. He was now in all probability about an hundred years old, and the act therefore could not have been one of mere childish levity. It was undoubtedly a known and voluntary instance of gross disrespect, or contemptuous deportment towards his aged parent, and as such justly gave occasion to the malediction that followed.—'Ham is here called 'the father of Canaan,' which intimates that he who was himself a father, should have been more respectful to him who was his father.' *Henry.*

24. *And Noah awoke, &c.* Finding himself covered, when he awoke, with a garment which he had no recollection of having spread over him when he laid down, he would naturally make inquiries concerning it of his sons, and thus would learn from Shem and Japheth all that had happened. It is unnecessary to suppose any supernatural revelation in the case.—¶ *Knew what his younger son had done unto him.* Heb. בן הקטן *his little son.* As Ham in the enumeration of Noah's sons is invariably placed between the other two, the presumption is, that he was between them in age; and consequently that he is here called 'younger' or

little' not in literal truth but in comparative dignity. His conduct on this occasion had so degraded him that Shem and Japheth were both preferred before him, and in this sense we think it is that he is here denominated 'little' or 'young,' an epithet that would otherwise sound strangely as applied to a person already an hundred years old. Still it is a point on which we cannot speak with confidence.

25. *And he said, Cursed be Canaan, &c.* The important prophecy here recorded, which is remarkable for the fulness and extensive reach of its meaning, involves several particulars requiring a minute and critical investigation, which may perhaps swell our remarks somewhat beyond their usual dimensions. The first inquiry that naturally arises respects the *procuring cause* of such an apparently severe denunciation, and that too a denunciation directed not against Ham, the real offender, but against Canaan his son, who does not appear from the text to have had any agency in the transaction. On this head we may remark, (1.) That the act of Ham was rather the *occasion* than the *cause* of the prediction against Canaan. At the most, his sin was that of *irreverence* and *unbecoming levity* towards his aged parent, and this, though by no means a slight offence, can yet be scarcely conceived to possess such peculiar enormity as to draw after it so dire a malediction not only upon the offender himself, but upon his posterity down to distant generations. It is moreover worthy of note, that Noah does not expressly say that *because* Ham had done so and so, *therefore* should his offspring be accursed; not to mention, that if Ham's malediction is to be referred entirely to his want of filial reverence, Shem's blessing, on the other hand, ought to be as distinctly ascribed to his piety towards his parent. But this evidently is not the case. We think then the conclu-

sion is fair, that as nothing is said of Ham personally in the sentence uttered, his conduct, though highly criminal, merely afforded an *occasion* for the prompting of one of the most signal prophecies contained in the Scriptures. In like manner we suppose the indiscretion of Hezekiah in displaying his treasures to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, Is. 39. 6, was not so truly the *cause* as the *occasion* of the severe denunciation and the actual heavy judgment that followed. (2.) As to the connection between the incident here mentioned and the predicted doom of Canaan, it is especially to be borne in mind, that here, as in hundreds of other instances in the Scriptures, *individuals* are not so much contemplated as the *nations* and *peoples* descending from them. As the blessings promised were not to be confined to the persons of Shem and Japheth, so the curse denounced was not to be restricted to the person of Canaan, but was to alight upon his posterity centuries after he was no more. But the judgments of God are not inflicted upon men irrespective of their moral character, nor have we any reason to think that this prediction was ever fulfilled upon the Canaanites themselves, any farther than as *their own sins* were the procuring causes of it. Noah therefore uttered the words from an *inspired foresight* of the sins and abominations of the abandoned stock of the Canaanites. Now it is clear from the subsequent history that the peculiar and characteristic sins of that people, the sins which in an especial manner incurred the divine indignation, were closely allied to the sin which immediately prompted Noah's denunciatory prophecy. It was *the uncovering of nakedness* (גלות עררה) or in other words, the prevalence of the most flagrant corruption, licentiousness, and debauchery of manners. In proof of this we have only to turn to the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus,

where the black specification of the leading crimes of the Canaanites is given, and we cannot fail to be struck with the coincidence even in the very point of the language of the description; the whole concluding with the solemn injunction, v. 24, 25, 'Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you. And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.' We may therefore justly regard the conduct of Ham towards his father as so far an image or sample of the future iniquitous conduct of the Canaanites, that it should very naturally be made, under the prompting of inspiration, a *suggesting occasion* of the curse now pronounced. (3.) This view of the subject, while it makes the burden of the prediction to centre more especially upon Canaan, does not utterly exclude Ham from all participation in it, inasmuch as no father can fail to be deeply affected with the prospect of a child's calamities. Omniscience perhaps saw that Ham's sin was not sufficiently aggravated to subject him justly to any severer punishment than the knowledge of the future lot of this portion of his posterity. But at the same time, it is worthy of remark, that although the sentence here recorded was to spend itself mainly upon the descendants of Ham in the line of Canaan, yet it is an historical fact, that the curse of servitude has signally fallen upon other branches of his posterity, of which the fate of the African race is a standing evidence; but how far we are to refer that fact to the effects of Noah's curse, on this occasion, is not clear. (4.) The prediction is not to be considered as necessarily affecting *individuals*, or even *communities* proceeding from Canaan, so long as they continued righteous. In Abraham's days, before the iniquity of the

Canaanites came to the full, Melchizedek whose name was expressive of his character, 'king of righteousness,' was a worthy priest of the most high God; and Abimelech whose name imports 'parental king' pleaded the integrity of his heart and the righteousness of his nation, Gen 20, 4—9, before God, and his plea was admitted. Yet both these personages appear to have been Canaanites. The import of this prediction will be still further developed as we proceed. —¶ *A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* Chal. 'working servant.' That is, a servant reduced to the lowest degree of bondage and degradation. It is an Hebraic idiom conveying a superlative idea like *holy of holies, king of kings, vanity of vanities, song of songs, &c.* The terms 'brother,' 'brethren,' were used by the Hebrews for more distant relatives; and this prophecy more especially entered on a course of fulfilment about eight hundred years after its delivery, when the Israelites, the descendants of Shem, subdued the Canaanites and took possession of their country. The prediction was still farther accomplished, when the scattered remnants of those tribes were expelled by David and settled in those parts of Africa which first fell under the dominion of the Romans, the undoubted descendants of Japheth. Canaan therefore was in early ages the slave of Shem, and in later times of Japheth; and in this way is the difficulty arising from the possible supposition that Canaan was to be in bondage to both his brethren at once, effectually removed. He first bowed to the rod of one, and then, some centuries afterwards, to that of the other.

26 *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.*

These words are to be regarded as far more than a simple expression of Noah's thanks to God for the pious act of Shem; for in this sense Japheth's conduct was entitled to equal commendation, and God could not, on this ground alone

26 And he said, 'Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

f Ps. 144. 15. Heb. 11. 16.

strictly be called any more the God of the one than of the other. The declaration therefore carries a higher import. From a view of the whole prophecy it cannot be doubted, we think, that whatever patriarchal prerogatives would otherwise have accrued to Ham as an elder brother they are here in fact transferred to Shem, the younger, and consequently that both the spiritual and temporal blessings which constituted the birthright henceforth devolved upon Shem as the appointed heir. In these were included mainly the promise of the Messiah as a natural descendant, and of the land of Canaan as a destined inheritance. This land, thus taken away from the Canaanites, and they reduced to bondage, was to be conferred upon the posterity of Shem, and that too in order that they might come into a close covenant relation to God; he becoming in a preeminent sense *their* God, and they his people, to which this earthly possession was to be entirely subordinate; 'for the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.' In these words, therefore, is mainly set forth the spiritual distinction of Shem, viz. that God should be his God, to which the promise of the earthly Canaan is subjoined. Viewed in this light, the words, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,' import that Jehovah, the true God, should, *as the God of Shem*, be the object of praise, homage, and blessing; that his worship should be established and perpetuated among them; that his name in opposition to that of idols should be acknowledged as known and revered in the line of this father of the chosen race, and that they on the other hand

27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

g Eph. 2. 13, 14. & 3. 6.

should receive from Him tokens of favour and blessing which were not vouchsafed to other people. This prediction as the time drew near for its further fulfilment was renewed in a still more clear and definite form to Abraham, Gen. 17. 7, 8, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; *and I will be their God.*' We find, moreover, that as the time of the ultimate accomplishment of the promise drew still nearer, the peculiar appropriated title of God, as the God of Shem, viz. Jehovah, begins to be more frequently employed, a fact which affords the genuine clew to the remarkable passages, Ex. 3. 14. and 6. 3. And it is especially worthy of note, that this peculiar privilege of Shem, of having God for his God, is more than once alluded to as distinguishing the Israelites from the Canaanites, when the former went to take possession of their inheritance, and is mentioned as a special reason for their obeying all the precepts enjoined upon them, and for abstaining from those abominations of the devoted race, which had subjected them to the curse. It will be noticed that throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth chapters of Leviticus, a large proportion of the statutes and judgments there delivered are accompanied with the solemn affirmation 'I am the Lord your God;' and finally it is said, ch. 20. 26, 'Ye



28 ¶ And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.' The reason of this mode of address is to be sought for in the remarkable prophecy respecting Shem which we are now considering. — ¶ *Canaan shall be his servant.* Heb. עַבְדִּי לְמֹנֶה *servant to them.* So also the Chal., Syr., and Arab. The Sept. and some others render in the sing. 'his servant,' but it is certain that according to prevailing usage the Heb. pronoun לְמֹנֶה is plural, and we incline to believe with Gesenius that it is always so used except when referring to a singular of the collective kind. By the phrase 'servant to them,' therefore, is to be understood either that Canaan was to be servant to Shem and Japheth successively, or, as we think still more probable, to Shem and Jehovah conjointly; for the intimate covenant relation between Shem and the God of Israel would naturally lead to their being spoken of together. The words of Joshua to the Gibeonites Josh. 9. 23, seem to favour this interpretation, 'Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.' Comp. v. 27, with my notes on the passage. By being given, or made *Nethinims*, to the house of God they were at the same time given to the service of Israel, and *vice versa*.

27. *God shall enlarge Japheth.* Rather, according to the Heb. יַפֶּחְתִּי לְרִפְתָּה *yapht leyepheth* 'shall enlarge or make room for Japheth,' very similar to the expression Gen. 26. 22, 'Now the Lord hath made room for us' (הֲרַחֵב יְהוָה לָנוּ). Thus the Gr., Chal., Syr., Arab. Erp., and Lat. Vulg., all which

take the word in the sense of increasing both the progeny and the territories of Japheth; and this, as a temporal promise, has been most remarkably fulfilled, for Japheth who had several more sons than either of his brethren, appears to have been the progenitor of more than half the human race. The whole of Europe and a considerable part of Asia were originally peopled, and have ever since been occupied, by Japheth's offspring. But it is supposed by some commentators that the mere promise of a vast posterity and extensive territory did not exhaust the full measure of Japheth's blessing. This opinion they found not only on the ensuing clause, which indeed supports it, but on the original term (יַפֶּחְתִּי *yapht*) here employed. This they render *persuade* instead of *enlarge*, from the fact of the root פָּתַח being generally used in the sense of *persuade, entice, allure*, by fair and kind words. Accordingly the phrase יַפֶּחְתִּי לְרִפְתָּה *yapht leyepheth*, in which there is a paranomasia or play upon the words, they would translate God 'shall persuade Japheth,' or still more literally, 'God shall persuade the persuasible,' i. e. 'God shall so work upon and allure Japheth that he shall be brought to the faith and obedience of the Gospel, and thus made to dwell in the tents of Shem. But to this interpretation it is a serious objection, (1.) That the original פָּתַח, wherever it signifies to *persuade* or *allure*, is always, with perhaps the single exception of Jer. 20. 7, used in a bad sense implying that kind of persuasion which is connected with *deception*. (2.) That when thus used it is always followed by the simple accusative of the object, instead of the dative with a preposition as here. (3.) That none of the more

ancient versions give it the sense of *persuading*, though the Targum of Jonathan, supposing the root of the verb to be *יָפַת* to be beautiful, instead of *שָׂתַת*, translates it, 'Jehovah will *beautify* the bounds of Japheth.' But grammatical propriety absolutely forbids such a derivation of the word and of course the sense grafted upon it. To all which may be added, that the promise interpreted in this sense could not be said to be peculiar to Japheth, for Ham was also finally as much to be *persuaded* or *allured* into the Christian church as Japheth. We are therefore thrown back upon the former as the true rendering; 'God shall *enlarge* or *make room* for Japheth,' in bestowing upon him a vast increase of offspring and a proportionately large extent of territory. This was perhaps by way of offset and concession for the spiritual blessings of the birthright which were transferred to Shem.—¶ *And he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.* Heb. *יִשְׁכֵּן* shall tabernacle. Here again the language is ambiguous, and probably designedly so, that a twofold sense might be included. The letter of the clause leaves it doubtful whether 'God' or 'Japheth' is the intended subject of the affirmation. The Chaldee supports the former; 'He shall make his glory (his Shekinah) to dwell in the tents of Shem.' Interpreted thus the prophecy was fulfilled by the visible presence of God in the tabernacle and temple of the Jews, to which the Psalmist so strikingly alludes, Ps. 33. 12, 'In Judah God is known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion.' It was still more signally accomplished when the Word was made flesh and dwelt (*σκηνοώσεν* tabernacled) among the Jews the children of Abraham and of Shem. On the other hand, if the 'he' be referred to Japheth the declaration is equally true. And so it will appear, whether we consider the imagery here em-

played or the history which confirms the event. As to the imagery, its leading point is in the words *יִשְׁכֵּן* and *אֹהֶל* translated *dwell* and *tents*. Now we know that the Jewish tabernacle, in which dwelt the Shekinah, was the most prominent object of their economy, and the principal means of preserving the true religion in the family of Shem. But under what description is it likely that the tabernacle, which was not erected till the days of Moses, should be mentioned in prophecy so early as the days of Moses? Most obviously under that of a tent, as a tent and a tabernacle are in effect one and the same thing, and the word in the Hebrew is the same. This holy tent or tabernacle was Shem's tabernacle, because it was erected among the sons of Shem, and because none might bear a part in the whole service of it who did not incorporate with the chosen family. This tabernacle and the service performed in it were emblems of the Christian church and the Christian service. In the mention of the tents of Shem therefore the Holy Spirit had allusion to the Jewish tabernacle as an emblem of the Christian church. Accordingly the dwelling of Japheth in these tents of Shem took place when the idolatrous nations of Japheth's line were converted to the faith of Christ, and became worshippers of the God of Shem in Shem's tabernacles. It appears therefore that the ultimate uniting of all nations in the faith of Christ was a purpose of heaven announced at as early a period as that of selecting a peculiar people to be for a season the sole depositaries of the true religion. It is remarkable too that the images of this prediction bear a near affinity to those under which later prophets have described the same event. Isaiah especially announces the calling of the Gentiles in the following words addressed to the Jewish church as the emblem of the Christian; Isaiah, 54.

## CHAPTER X.

NOW these *are* the generations of the sons of Noah; Shem,

Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

a ch. 9. 1, 7, 19.

2, 'Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations.' Here the image presented to the prophet is that of an enlargement of the sacred tent, to contain new crowds of worshippers; and the stakes are to be driven deep and firm, and the cords to be lengthened and drawn tight, that the sides of the tent may be able to sustain the pressure of the multitudes within it. Noah's allusion is also to the tabernacle and the image presented is the admission of foreign worshippers. It is therefore one and the same scene which the patriarch and the prophet have before them; and except in the distinct mention of the particular circumstance that the new worshippers should be chiefly of Japheth's stock, Noah's prophecy differs not from Isaiah's, otherwise than as an outline differs from a more finished drawing of the same objects. And then if we turn to history, the fact is notorious that the gospel from the beginning to the present time has made the greatest progress in Europe, and in those parts of Asia which were first peopled by the posterity of Japheth. So that in every sense the oracular promise has been most signally fulfilled.

## CHAPTER X.

The object of the present chapter is to furnish a brief but authentic record of the origin of the principal nations of the earth. In the form of a genealogical table or roll of the descendants of Noah it contains a view of the pedigree of nations in the then known world. As such it is a record of inestimable value, being the most ancient ethnographic document which we possess. It does not indeed afford to us, at this late peri-

od of the world, that degree of definite information which it doubtless conveyed in the time of Moses. A proper name is apt to assume a new form every time it is translated into a different language, and often in the same dialect at different periods. It is not therefore to be wondered at that many nations and peoples should have lost the names by which they were originally called; or that these names should have become so altered by time, or so distorted in being transferred into other tongues as to make it difficult to trace their relation to those here given. But notwithstanding the uncertainty arising from this source, far more successful results have attended the researches of learned men in this department than could have been anticipated, so that nearly all the leading nations of ancient and modern times can be distinctly traced up to their patriarchal progenitors recited in the present catalogue. Indeed the subject of this chapter has been so nearly exhausted by the labours of Bochart, Le Clerc, Wells, Michaelis, Sir Wm. Jones, Hales, Faber and others, that little is left for future gleaners until a more minute acquaintance shall be formed with the Asiatic regions by some one who shall be master of the various dialects spoken from the Indus to the Nile and from the Arabic gulf to the Caspian Sea.— In considering this record, it is important to remark, (1.) That the names of *individuals* are for the most part names of the nations descended from them, just as Judah and Israel, though names of single persons are also names of whole nations. This is evident not only from the fact that many of them are in the plural number, as all those ending in *im* in v. 13, 14; but also

from the termination of many of them, especially those ending in *ite*, v. 16—18, being descriptive of *tribes* and not of individuals. (2.) Although this chapter is placed *before* the eleventh, yet in the order of time it properly belongs *after* it; for the confusion of tongues at Babel, which was the principal occasion of the dispersion of mankind, must of course have *preceded* that dispersion. This is still farther evident from the expression ‘after their tongues,’ implying a diversity of languages, which we know did not exist prior to the confusion of tongues mentioned in the eleventh chapter. But such transpositions are common in the sacred writers. (4.) Speaking in general terms it may be said, that the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—are exhibited in this genealogical chart as the representatives of the three grand divisions of the earth, Asia, Africa and Europe, although not precisely according to the boundaries of modern times. The descendants of Japheth peopled Europe and the north-west of Asia, those of Ham, the southern quarter of the globe particularly Africa; and the Shemites, the countries of Central Asia, particularly those around the Euphrates. In accordance with this, a tradition has long and extensively prevailed throughout the East, particularly among the Arabs and Persians, that Noah divided the earth among his three sons. But as this tradition rests upon no express authority of Scripture, the presumption, we think, is that it arose from some confused recollection or interpretation of Noah’s prophecy mentioned and explained at the close of the preceding chapter.

1. *These are the generations, &c.* For the sake of conciseness and perspicuity, the genealogical table here given may be thrown into the following tabular form along with the most probable explanations which the labours of the learned have enabled us to offer.

## 1. JAPHETITES.

I. GOMER: the Cimmerians on the north coast of the Black Sea. Their descendants were,

1. *Ashkenaz*: an unknown people, perhaps between Armenia and the Black Sea.

2. *Riphat*: the inhabitants of the Riphæan Mountains.

3. *Togarmah*: Armenia.

II. MAGOG: the inhabitants of the Caucasus and adjacent countries—Scythians.

III. MADAI: the Medes.

IV. JAVAN: the Ionians or Greeks. Their descendants were,

1. *Elishah*: the Hellenes, strictly so called.

2. *Tarshish*: Tartessus in the south of Spain.

3. *Kittim*: the inhabitants of Cyprus, and other Greek Islands, with the Macedonians.

4. *Dodanim*: the Dodonæi, in Epirus.

V. TUBAL: the Tibareni, in Pontus.

VI. MESHECH: the Moschi (Muscovites), in the Moschian mountains, between Iberia, Armenia, and Colchis.

VII. TIRAS: the Thracians, or perhaps the dwellers on the rivers Tiras, the Dniester.

*14 names in all.*

## 2. HAMITES.

I. CUSH: the Æthiopians and Southern Arabians. Their descendants were,

1. *Nimrod*: the first king of Sinear (Shinar), i. e. Babylon and Mesopotamia, where he founded Babel, Erech, Calneh, and Accad.

2. *Seba*: Meröe.

3. *Havilah*: the Chaulotæ in Southern Arabia.

4. *Sabtha*: Sabota in Southern Arabia.

5. *Ragma*: Rhegma in the south-east of Arabia, or the Persian Gulf. Descendants or colonies were,

A. *Sheba*: probably a tribe in South Arabia.

B. *Dedan*: Dedan an island in the Persian Gulf.

6. *Sabtecha*: the inhabitants of the east coasts of Æthiopia.

II. *MIZBAIM*: the Egyptians. Their descendants were,

1. *Ludim* } probably African

2. *Anamim* } tribes.

3. *Lehabim* or *Lubim*: the Libyans.

4. *Naphtuchim*: the inhabitants of the province of Nephtys, on the Lake of Sirbo, on the borders of Egypt and Asia

5. *Pathrusim*: the inhabitants of the Egyptian canton of Pathures (Pathros).

6. *Castuhim*: the Colchians. Their descendants or colonies were,

A. *Philistim*: the Philistines.

B. *Caphtorim*: the Cretans.

III. *PHUT*: the Mauritanians.

VI. *CANAAN*: the inhabitants of the country so called, from Sidon to the south end of the Dead Sea. From them are derived,

1. *Sidonians*: or the northern borders of Canaan or Phœnicia.

2. The *Hittites* (Chetites or Hethites): in the country

of Hebron south of Jerusalem.

3. The *Jebusites*: in and around Jerusalem.

4. The *Amorites*: on the east and west side of the Dead Sea.

5. The *Girgasites*.

6. The *Hivites*: on the River Hermon and in the valleys of Lebanon.

7. The *Arkites*: at the foot of Lebanon.

8. The *Sinites*: in the country of Lebanon.

9. The *Arvadites*: on the Phœnician Island of Aradus and the opposite coast.

10. The *Zemarites*: the inhabitants of the Phœnician town of Sinyra.

11. The *Hamathites*: the inhabitants of the Syrian town of Epiphania on the Orontes.

30 Primitive nations

### 3. SHEMITES.

I. *ELAM*: the Persians, particularly of the province of Elymais.

II. *ASSHUR*: the Assyrians, founders of Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calneh, and Resen.

III. *ARPHAXAD*: the inhabitants of the northern point of Assyria (Arrapachitis). A descendant was,

*Shelah*: from whom came *Eber*: progenitor of the Hebrews, and from him,

A. *Peleg*: and

B. *Joktan*: called by the Arabians *Kachtan*, ancestor of the various Arab tribes mentioned v. 26—29.

IV. *LUD*: probably a people of Æthiopia.

V. *ARAM*: the inhabitants of Syria



2 <sup>b</sup> The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

3 And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

4 And the sons of Javan; Eli-

shah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5 By these were <sup>c</sup> the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

6 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

b 1 Chron. 1. 5, &c.

c Ps. 72. 10. Jer. 2. 10. & 25. 22. Zeph. 2. 11.  
d 1 Chron. 1. 8, &c.

and Mesopotamia. Their descendants;

1. *Uz*: the inhabitants of a district in the north of Arabia Deserta.
2. *Hul*: perhaps the inhabitants of Cælo-Syria.
3. *Gether*: unknown.
4. *Mush*: the inhabitants of a part of the Gordiæan Mountains (Mons Masius) north of Nisibis.

### 26. *Peopling nations.*

5. *The isles of the Gentiles.* In order to understand this expression it is necessary to be borne in mind, that the Heb. word אִיִּים *isles* was used to denote not only such countries as are surrounded on all sides by the sea, but those also which were so situated in relation to the Jews that people could not or did not go to them or come from them except by water. Thus it meant all countries, generally, beyond sea; and the inhabitants of such countries were to the Jews 'islanders' though occupying continental regions. The term applies, therefore, for the most part to the countries west of Palestine, the usual communication with which was by the Mediterranean. In a general sense the term may be understood to apply to Europe, as far as known, and to Asia Minor. Accordingly the Scripture foreseeing that Europe would from the first embrace the Gospel, and for many ages be the principal seat of its

operations, the Messiah himself is introduced by Isaiah as addressing himself to its inhabitants;—'Listen, *Oh isles*, unto me; and hearken ye people from afar! Jehovah hath called me from the womb; and hath said unto me, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob; I will also give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou shouldst be my salvation to the ends of the earth.' In this call to the Gentiles we of this Western Continent may thankfully acknowledge ourselves included, as ours is a European ancestry.——¶ *Divided in their lands.* Heb. נִפְרָדָּם *dispersed, spread abroad*; from which it is plain that the word 'isles' must be understood metonymically for 'islanders,' or *inhabitants of the isles*, as otherwise the phrase is scarcely intelligible.——¶ *Every one after his tongue.* Thus clearly evincing that this dispersion took place *after* the confusion of tongues, though related before it. See above.

6. *Mizraim.* No proper name of an individual in Hebrew, we believe, ever terminates in *im*, which is the plural or dual form. Mizraim is evidently the name of a family or tribe taking name from the second son of Ham, who was probably called Mizr, and who is generally allowed to have settled with his family in Egypt. The Egyptians are always called *Mizraim* (מִצְרַיִם *Mitzraim*) in the Bible, and their country to this day throughout the East is gen-

7 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he

erally known as the 'land of Mitzr'; an appellation which has been preserved especially by the Arabs, in regard to whom, as preservers of primitive names, Prideaux makes the following important remark; 'These people being the oldest in the world, and who had never been by any conquest dispossessed or driven out of their country, but have always remained there in a continued descent from the first planters until this day; and being also as little given to alterations in their manners and usages as in their country; have still retained the names of places which were first attached to them; and on these aboriginal people acquiring the empire of the East, they restored the original names to many cities, after they had been lost for ages under the arbitrary changes of successive conquerors.' This accounts for the just importance which is given to existing Arabic names in attempting to fix the sites of ancient places.

8. *And Cush begat Nimrod.* Heb. נִמְרוֹד *Nimrod* from מֵרֹד *marad*, to rebel, accordant with which is the Arabic *marada*, to be insolent, contumacious, refractory. The name, which is supposed to be equivalent to 'son of rebellion,' in all probability was not given him by his parents, but by after ages on account of his character, of which more is said in a subsequent note.—

¶ *Began to be a mighty one in the earth.* Heb. גִּבּוֹר *gibbor*, a giant. The term is evidently descriptive of character and actions, rather than of bodily stature; a remark we have already made respecting the term as applied to the antediluvian giants. See on ch. 6. 4.

began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

e Jer. 16. 16. Mic. 7. 2. f ch. 6. 11.

9. *A mighty hunter.* Heb. גִּבּוֹר צַיִד *a giant, or mighty one, in hunting.* Gr. 'a hunting giant.' Arab. 'a terrible tyrant.' Syr. 'a warlike giant.' The original term for 'hunting' occurs elsewhere, not so much in reference to the pursuit of game in the forest, as to a violent invasion of the persons and rights of men. Thus 1 Sam. 24. 12, 'Thou *huntest* my soul (i. e. my life) to take it.' Lam. 3. 15, 'Mine enemies *chased* (Heb. hunted) me sore.' Jer. 16. 16, 'I will send for many *hunters*, and they shall *hunt* them (i. e. the people) from every mountain.' This usage undoubtedly affords us a clew to Nimrod's true character. Though probably, like most of the heroes of remote classical antiquity, addicted to the hunting of wild beasts, yet his bold, aspiring, arrogant spirit rested not content with this mode of displaying his prowess. With the band of adventurous and lawless spirits which his predatory skill had gathered around him, he proceeded gradually from hunting beasts to assaulting, oppressing, and subjugating his fellow-men. That the inhuman practice of war, at least in the ages after the flood, originated with this daring usurper, is in the highest degree probable.

Proud Nimrod first the bloody chase began,  
A mighty hunter—and his prey was man.

With this view of the character of Nimrod the ancient testimonies strikingly accord. They uniformly represent him, not only as the first of tyrannical oppressors of their kind, but also as the prominent instigator of a widespread apostasy from the faith and wor-

10 \* And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

g Mic. 5. 6.

ship of his patriarchal ancestors. Josephus says of him that 'he was a bold man, and of great strength of hand; and that he gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them to a constant dependance on his own power.' The Targum of Onkelos on 1 Chron. 1. 10, informs us, that 'he began to be a mighty man in sin, a murderer of innocent men, and a rebel before the Lord.' In the Jerusalem Targum it is written; 'He was a hunter of the children of men in their languages, and he said unto them, Depart from the religion of Shem and cleave unto the institutes of Nimrod.' It was doubtless the original design of the Most High that the earth should be settled in small colonies, tribes or communities, under the patriarchal form of government, Deut. 32. 8, and Nimrod's sin consisted in boldly contravening the divine counsel in this respect, and in laying the foundation, by means of rapine, violence, and usurpation, of that species of dominion ever since distinguished by the name of *kingdoms, empires, monarchies*, &c., by which the great mass of mankind have been in fact doomed to ignorance, and held in degrading servitude. It is proper then that every mention of Babylon in the sacred writings, should recall to righteous reproach the memory of Nimrod.—¶ *Before the Lord.* That is, high-handedly, presumptuously; an expression which would scarcely have been used, had nothing more been intended than that he was a courageous hunter of wild beasts. The phrase denotes his daring spirit, that he did what he did in the face of heaven, in defiance of the divine authority. Thus ch. 13. 13,

the inhabitants of Sodom are said to be wicked and 'sinners *before the Lord*,' or in an aggravated degree.—¶ *Wherefore it is said, &c.* Nimrod's fame was so great that his name became proverbial. In after times any one who was a daring plunderer in defiance of heaven was likened to him, just as the wicked kings of Israel were likened to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He became the type, pattern, or father of usurpers and martial marauders, and just one of those kind of men whom history and poetry are prone to celebrate as 'a hero;' their admirers little thinking that things which are highly esteemed among men are held in abomination with God.

10. *The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, &c.* The original word for kingdom (מַמְלָכָה *mamlekeh*) signifies more properly the *act of ruling* than the *territorial limits* over which a governed country extends; and here the idea is, that the beginning, i. e. first theatre, of his *active ruling or sovereignty* was the cities or towns here mentioned, which in that age could have been but inconsiderable places, to whatever pitch of power or population they may afterwards have attained. Babel (i. e. confusion) is but another name for Babylon which, from its being the primitive seat of despotical empire, and probably of idolatrous worship, has come to be employed in the Scriptures, particularly in the Apocalypse, as a typical or symbolical designation of oppressive governments both civil and ecclesiastical. When we learn, therefore, from the prophetic oracles, that 'Babylon the great' is to be destroyed before the complete establishment of the kingdom of Christ

11 Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,

on earth, we are virtually taught that the entire fabric of civil and spiritual oppression is to be demolished, that all vestiges of the organized despotic rule which commenced under Nimrod on the plains of Shinar are to be for ever done away. —¶ *In the land of Shinar.* There are no data to enable us to fix the limits of this land with precision. By some it is confined to lower Mesopotamia, or Babylonia, including both banks of the Euphrates and Tigris; while others make it extend through the whole region included between these two rivers, into Mesopotamia Proper, beyond Nisibis, and the similarity of sound between Shinar and the city and mountain of *Sinjara*, is enlisted in the argument. That the former territory, which nearly corresponds to the modern *Irak Arabi*, is part of what was the land of Shinar, is admitted on all hands; the only question is, how far it extended northward in Mesopotamia Proper; and this question we must be content for the present to leave unresolved.

11. *Out of that land went forth Asshur, &c.* This is a much disputed passage. As the Heb. will admit of being rendered, 'Out of that land he (Nimrod) went forth to Assyria,' many distinguished commentators are disposed to adopt this as the true sense, principally for the reason, that Moses is here speaking, not of the posterity of Shem, to which Asshur belonged, but of that of Ham; and it perfectly accords, they say, with Nimrod's character to represent him as *hunting* from land to land for the purpose of extending his dominion. But the more obvious grammatical construction is that given in the text, the word 'Asshur,' whether meaning the son of Shem or his descendants, being the true subject

or nominative to the verb. As to the objection urged by Bochart, that there would be an impropriety in introducing Asshur, the son of Shem, in the midst of the genealogy of Ham; it may be answered, that as Moses is here relating the history of the rebel Nimrod with his Cushite followers, who had invaded the territories already occupied by the descendants of Shem, it was very natural that he should allude to one of the principal results of that invasion, viz. the expulsion of Asshur from his former possessions and his seeking a country for himself elsewhere. Indeed the fortunes of Asshur are so intimately connected with the history of Nimrod, that the impropriety would have been in disjoining them, particularly in this place, where the writer is describing the first great cities after the flood. We infer therefore that it was Asshur, and not Nimrod, who went forth out of the land of Shinar, especially as otherwise we should be required to read the original אֲשׁוּר אֶל or אֲשׁוּרָה to Assyria. Asshur, being either unable to resist the progress of Nimrod's arms, or unwilling to tolerate his idolatrous practices, probably retired before him, and following the upward course of the Tigris fixed himself on the site of Nineveh, which he built, and which subsequently became the seat of the Assyrian empire. According to this, which we regard as the true interpretation, we recognise in Nimrod and Asshur the respective founders of the Babylonian and Assyrian monarchies. —¶ *Builded Nineveh.* Heb. נִינְוֶה *Nineveh*; supposed to be compounded of *Nin* and *Naveh*, i. e. habitation of Nin or Ninus; but who he was, or for what reason the city was called after him, the scanty records of those remote ages leave us

12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same *is* a great city.

13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Ananim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

14 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (<sup>h</sup> out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.

15 ¶ And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth,

16 And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,

17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. and afterwards were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

h 1 Chron. 1. 12.

1 ch. 13. 12, 14, 15, 17. & 15. 18—21. Numb. 34. 2—12. Josh. 12. 7, 8.

altogether in doubt. Though some uncertainty rests upon its site, yet it is believed to have lain opposite the modern town of Mosul, on the east bank of the Tigris where the villages of Nunia (also called Nebbi Yunes, i. e. the prophet Jonah), Nimrood, and Kalla Nunia (the castle of Nineveh) preserve to the present day the remembrance of the most ancient capital of the world. For an account of its primitive greatness and its present state, and the remarkable manner in which the divine predictions concerning it have been fulfilled, see Newton and Keith on the prophecies.—¶ *The city Rehoboth.*

Heb. רְחוֹבוֹת עִיר *Rehoboth Ir*, which some following the Lat. Vulg. are disposed to render, 'The streets of the city,' i. e. the city of Nineveh. But to this it is, we think, validly objected, (1.) That the proper Heb. expression for 'streets of the city' is not רְחוֹבוֹת עִיר, but רְחוֹבוֹת הָעִיר. (2.) That it would be wholly superfluous to speak of building the streets of a city, apart from the building of the city itself. (3.) That the term 'building,' though very properly spoken of a city, is not applicable to the construction of streets. Michaelis very plausibly suggests that עִיר *ir* is a part of the name of the city, and that it is called *Rehoboth Ir* to distinguish it from רְחוֹבוֹת הַמָּדָר *Reho-*

*both by the river* mentioned Gen. 36. 37. The point is of too little importance to warrant particular investigation, and we leave it, with many other similar questions, enveloped in the darkness of remote antiquity.

12. *The same is a great city.* Heb. הָרָא הָעִיר הַגְּדֹלָה *this is the great city*; which would seem to determine the reference to Nineveh instead of Resen. Precisely the same language is used of Nineveh, Jon. 3. 2, 'Arise, go unto Nineveh, *that great city* (הָעִיר הַגְּדֹלָה),' and we learn from v. 3, that it was a city of three days' journey, that is, of sixty miles in circuit; and it is not unlikely that the whole four cities here mentioned were situated near together and united under one social polity so as in some sense to be denominated one city.

14. *Out of whom came Philistim.* From Mizraim, the father of the Egyptians, descended also the Philistines. Their situation was near to that of the Canaanites; but not being of them, their country was not given to Israel. This accounts for their not attempting to take it, though in after times there were frequent wars between them.

15, 16. *Canaan begat—Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, &c.* The relation in which the chosen people were destined to stand in after ages to



20 These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

21 Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were *children* born.

these nations made it proper for the historian to be more particular in describing them and their boundaries.

21. *Shem—the father of all the children of Eber.* The account of the posterity of this patriarch is introduced in somewhat of a singular manner. It is mentioned as an appendage to his name, a kind of title of honour that was to go along with it, that he was ‘father of all the children of Eber.’ But this is doubtless inserted with an eye to the prediction of Noah which we have already considered in the notes on the preceding chapter. When the sacred writer would describe *the line of the curse*, he calls Ham *the father of Canaan*; and when *the line of promise*, he calls Shem *the father of all the children of Eber*, or in other words, of the Hebrews. In both cases the fathers had other sons besides those mentioned, but the historian following the entail of the blessing and the curse, gives a special prominence to the two opposing lines to which they respectively pertained. Some indeed prefer to understand ‘Eber’ here, not as a proper name, but as an appellative applied to the Hebrew nation, from the root עבר *abar*, to pass over, to cross, as if the Hebrews were so denominated from their passing over the Euphrates in coming from the East to the land of Canaan. But in our note on Gen. 14. 13, we shall endeavour to show that the other is by far the most probable derivation of the term.—¶ *The brother of Japheth the elder.* Heb. אֶחָיו

22 The <sup>k</sup> children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

23 And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.

24 And Arphaxad begat <sup>l</sup> Salah; and Salah begat Eber.

k 1 Chron. 1. 17. l eb. 11. 12.

אֶחָיו רֵפֶת הגדול *brother of Japheth the great.* The sense is in itself ambiguous. The epithet *elder* (Heb. great) may be grammatically constructed either with Shem or Japheth. The Septuagint version adopts the latter, which is followed in the English; the Latin Vulgate the former. It will we think, be found as a general rule, that where an adjective follows two substantives in a state of construction, it agrees with the former, as in Deut. 11. 7, ‘Your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord (Heb. מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה הגדל *the work or doing of Jehovah the great*).’ But a still more certain guide is afforded in other passages exhibiting the same form of expression, and pointing out degrees of relationship. Thus Judg. 1. 13, ‘The son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, the younger (Heb. בְּרֵכְנָנוּ אֶחָיו, (כלב הקטן, which comp. with Josh. 15. 13, and Num. 13. 2–6, seems plainly intended to imply, that it was not Caleb, but Kenaz, who is designated by the term ‘the younger.’ Still more conclusive is the following; Judg. 9. 5, ‘Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal (Heb. יוֹתָם בְּרִירְבָעַל הקטן *Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal, the young*);’ where, although the English translation varies, the construction in the original is precisely the same as in the present passage. Had a uniform mode of rendering been pursued, the words before us would no doubt have been translated, ‘Shem, the elder brother of Japhet.’ At the same time, though we consider the epithet ‘elder

25 <sup>m</sup> And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg, for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan.

26 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,

27 And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,

28 And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

29 And Ophir, and Havilah,

m 1 Chron. 1. 19.

or 'great' as referring properly to Shem, yet we regard it as pointing not to *seniority of age*, but to *priority in honour*; for the evidence of Japheth's being the eldest of the three sons of Noah is too strong to be set aside. Yet if it be admitted, as intimated above, that Shem, the younger, obtained the birthright, this will account for his being almost invariably placed first when the brothers are mentioned together. In the present catalogue, it is true, this order is reversed, the reason of which is not entirely obvious, unless it be that in reciting the *posterity* of each, the last place is assigned to Shem as the most honourable, whereas in the mention of the *individuals*, as in v. 1, the contrary order is assumed. After all, if any one prefers the view given in our translation, he is perhaps occupying ground quite as strong as that which we have taken. The point is one of little moment.

25. *Peleg, for in his days was the earth divided.* The Heb. פֶּלֶג *Peleg* comes from the root פָּלַג *palag*, to divide, and properly signifies *division*. It is applied for the most part to the artificial trenches, channels or canals which were common in the East for the purpose of *dividing* or *distributing* the water employed in irrigating the

and Jobab: all these *were* the sons of Joktan.

30 And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east.

31 These *are* the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

32 <sup>a</sup> These *are* the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: <sup>o</sup> and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

n ver. 1.

fields. The implication here is that of a division or dispersion of nations, like that of streams of water from one source, and that as this occurred about the period of Peleg's birth, he was named from the event. Thus Josephus; 'He was called Phaleg, because he was born at the dispersion of the nations to their several countries; for Phaleg among the Hebrews signifies *division*.' It is at the same time worthy of notice that the original term, or the root from which it comes, is applied Ps. 55. 9(10), not to a *physical* but to a *moral* division, and one singularly analogous to that which gave occasion to Phaleg's name; 'Destroy, O Lord, and *divide* (פָּלַג *pallag*) their tongues;' i. e. confound their counsels, destroy their unanimity, and break them into contending factions; the very effect which was produced at Babel, and to which the dispersion was owing. 'It is good to write the remembrance of God's worthy works, whether of mercy or justice, upon the names of our children.' Trapp. As it cannot well be doubted that Peleg was named from this incident, though the incident itself is not expressly related till we come to the eleventh chapter, we are thus enabled to fix the date of the remarkable epoch of the confusion of tongues; for as

## CHAPTER XI.

AND the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

Peleg was born one hundred and one years after the flood, this event must have occurred A. M. 1757-8.

## CHAPTER XI.

The inspired historian, having frequently intimated in the preceding chapter that the earth was divided and its first settlements made by the sons of Noah 'after their tongues,' proceeds, in the present, to inform us of the event to which that diversity of languages and the consequent dispersion of mankind was owing. This was the project of building the city and tower of Babel—a project formed in direct contravention of the designs of heaven in regard to the occupation of the earth at large by the various descendants of Noah. But according to usage very common with the sacred writers, this event is related out of its proper order, the *cause* of the dispersion being stated *after* the dispersion itself. See on Gen. 10. 25, 32.

1. *The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.* Heb. שפה אחת ודבָרִים אֶחָדִים *of one lip and one (kind of) words.* By the 'whole earth' is obviously meant *the inhabitants of the whole earth*, an idiom of very frequent occurrence in Hebrew. Thus 1 Kings, 10. 24, 'All the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom.' Gen. 41. 57, 'And all countries (Heb. כָּל הָאָרֶץ *all the earth*) came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn.' Comp. 1 Kings 8. 27 with 2 Chron. 6. 18; and Is. 37. 18 with 2 Kings 19. 17. That this language was the Hebrew is, we think, in the highest degree probable, though the historical proofs necessary to demonstrate the position have not been

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.

preserved to us. It appears quite evident that throughout Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Ethiopia, there was at some distant period but one language spoken. But this region is admitted to have been the original seat of the post-diluvian inhabitants of the earth. The language there spoken therefore was in all probability the language of Noah, and the language of Noah can scarcely have been any other than that of the antediluvians; and that this was the Hebrew cannot well be doubted if we consider that the names of persons and places mentioned in the early history of the world are as pure Hebrew as the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or those of Solomon, and Malachi. Thus Adam, Eve, Cain, Seth, Abel; Eden, Nod, Enoch, &c., are all words of purely Hebraic form, structure, and signification, and there is not the least evidence of their being interpretations, as some have suggested, of primitive terms. Had they been translations, we have reason to think the same method would have been followed as in several instances in the New Testament, where the original term is used and the interpretation avowedly subjoined. But Moses gives not the least hint of his translating these terms, nor does he in the whole course of his history, when speaking of the names of persons, utter a single word from which we can infer the existence of an earlier language. Conceiving this then to be a point not reasonably to be questioned, it remains to investigate with still more precision the exact meaning of the clause before us, on which the true character of the, confusion' here described very much depends.

The original word for 'language,' it will be observed, is שפה *saphah*, *lip*. But it is certain that this is not the usual Scripture term for *language*. That term is לשון *leshon*, *tongue*, and the sense here given to שפה *lip* is not sustained by more than two or three passages in the whole compass of the Bible, and those of somewhat doubtful import. In the utterance of words in any language the *lip* is a principal organ. The various niceties of pronunciation depend in great measure upon its motions, and if it were intended to say that all men not only had a common language, but a common mode of pronouncing it, we know not that this could be more appositely expressed in Hebrew than by the phrase here employed, that 'all the earth was of one lip.' Such in fact we believe to be the genuine sense of the words; according to which sense, however, the existence of a common language, though necessarily implied in the circumstance of a common mode of articulation, is not the primary idea intended to be conveyed. If this interpretation be admitted, the *confusion of the lip* (בללת שפה) is the *confusion of the pronunciation*, and this we may suppose to be the primary import of the words. That this mode of rendering does no violence to the original, will be acknowledged by every Hebrew scholar. For although the mass of interpreters have explained the phrase as implying *the origination of different languages*, yet it is to be noticed that Moses nowhere else expressly mentions such a fact, nor does the Heb. term בלל *balal* necessarily denote it. Indeed it may be doubted whether it does not rather imply the reverse. The Jewish writer Philo in speaking of this event says, 'He calls it 'confusion,' whereas if he had designed to indicate the rise of different languages, he would have more aptly called it 'division;' for those things which are divided into parts, are not so much *confounded* as

*distinguished.*' Confusion is properly the mixture of things which before such confusion were by nature distinct. And a lip may be said to be *confounded* when a mode of utterance previously distinct, clear, and intelligible, becomes by any means impeded, thick, stammering, or, in a word, *confused*. There can be no doubt that the Latin words *Balbus*, *stammerer*, and *Balbutio*, *stammering*, derive their origin from the Heb. בלל *balal*, or, by doubling the first radical בלל *balbal*, *bilbel*, from which latter form of the word comes *Babel*, closely related to the English and German *babble*. The Greek βαρβαρος *barbaros* (by commutation of liquids for βαλβαλος *balbalos*) a *barbarian*, primarily signifying one of a rude or outlandish pronunciation, is doubtless to be referred to the same root. So far therefore as the leading and legitimate sense of the original terms is concerned, we seem to be abundantly warranted in assigning to the phrase the sense proposed. It is easy to see however that the consequences of this kind of confusion would be much the same as if it were a multiplication of new languages. If one should, like the Ephraimites, utter 'Sibboleth' when he meant 'Shibboleth,' it would of course lead to misunderstanding, dispute, and division; and yet, the original language would remain substantially unaltered, and if it were a *written* language could probably be as easily read by all parties after the confusion as before. And that this was actually the case, the continued incorrupt integrity and purity of the Hebrew afford we think decisive evidence.—It may be well however in this connection to advert to the opinion of the learned Vitringa on this subject (*Observ. Sac. L. I. c. 9.*), especially as his preferred interpretation can easily be reconciled or incorporated with that which we have given above. He supposes that the dominant idea conveyed by the

words is that of *unity of counsel and purpose*; that the builders of Babel in the outset of their undertaking not only had a common language, but presented the very spectacle of union to which, Paul exhorts the Corinthians, Cor. 1. 10, 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that *ye all speak the same thing*, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment;' and that the confusion consisted in breaking up this concord and splitting the multitude into various contending factions which could no longer cooperate together, but were obliged to separate and disperse themselves in different directions over the earth; thus bringing about the very purpose of heaven which they had conspired to defeat. In support of this interpretation he appeals to the usage of the sacred writers in a number of passages in which this sense of the terms appears to be involved, particularly as it respects the latter **דברים** *words*. The office of *words* is to express the inward thoughts, feelings, and purposes of the speaker; and to say that a company of men were all *of one kind of words* seems equivalent to saying that they were all *unanimous in their counsels*. A somewhat similar mode of diction occurs in other passages. Thus Josh. 9. 2, 'They gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel, *with one accord* (Heb. **פה אחד** *with one mouth*).' Ex. 24. 3, 'And all the people answered *with one voice* (**כול אחד** *kol ahad*, i. e. *unanimously*), and said,' &c. So also 1 Kings, 22. 13. This view of the writer's meaning we cannot but regard as highly plausible, and it is one decidedly favoured by several of the ancient paraphrasts. Thus the Jerusalem Targum, 'And all the inhabitants of the earth were of one language, one discourse, and the same counsel.' Thus too Solo-

mon Jarchi explains the words by saying 'They entered into *the same counsel*.' A still farther confirmation of this sense is drawn from the term (**פלג** *palag*) applied in ch. 10. 25, to this event and of which we have before remarked that it is distinctly paralleled in Ps. 55. 10, 'Destroy, O Lord, and *divide their tongues*;' i. e. distract their counsels. The view now given of the writer's meaning appears amply accordant with the declared design of heaven in effecting the event. This was to cause a dispersion of the multitudes congregated at Babylon; an end which did not require for its accomplishment the instantaneous formation of new languages, but simply such a confusion in the utterance of the old, as should naturally lead to misapprehension, discord, and division. The dialectic discrepancies, however, thus originating, though perhaps not very great at first, would become gradually more and more marked, as men became more widely separated from each other, and by the influence of climate, laws, customs, religion, and various other causes, till they finally issued in substantially different languages. As this is the simplest, so it is perhaps the most rational account of the confusion of tongues at Babel, an event in regard to which historically considered, it is probable there will always adhere some points of obscurity to task and to baffle the researches of the learned.

2. *As they journeyed from the East.* Heb. **בנסעם** *in their breakings-up, or removing*. The term is peculiar, being almost exclusively applied to that kind of progress which is made by Nomadic hordes as they alternately pitch and strike their tents, and slowly advance with their flocks and herds from one region to another. The idea usually attached to the English term 'to journey,' implying a more or less rapid passage from one place to another, and that for a set purpose, is alto-



gether foreign to the genuine sense of the original.—Commentators have found difficulty in satisfactorily accounting for the use of the phrase ‘from the East’ in this connection. As the mountains of Armenia on which the ark is supposed to have rested, are situated to the north of Babylonia, it might have been supposed that the direction said to have been travelled would have been southward instead of westward. To this it has been considered by some sufficient to reply, that Moses may here have spoken of these localities in a general manner, in reference to the country in which he wrote; from which as Shinar lay to the east, and the mountains of Ararat were probably conceived somewhat vaguely by him to lie still more remote in the same direction, he might have said, without designing to observe strict topographical accuracy, that they journeyed from the East. But we think a still more probable solution may be given free from such an apparent conflict with the letter of the text. It is a fact which will scarcely be questioned, that, at all times, population has extended into every country, in the first instance, along the courses of its rivers. The cause of this is the facility of passage, and the ready means of subsistence which are afforded by the banks of the rivers and the country adjacent. Wherever, in the present day, newly-discovered countries are colonized, we observe the population and the cultivation of the land extending into the interior along the lines of the rivers. Regarding Noah and his sons then in the same light as we should regard any of their posterity, if placed in like circumstances, we may assume, that they descended from the place where the ark rested into the valley-regions below, and following the course of some stream which they would naturally meet with (as a valley generally supposes a stream), they would in process of time have reached

the sea, unless for special reasons they had been induced to take up their residence in some suitable intervening country. And that this was the case in the present instance is the express assertion of the text. They stayed their course in the plains of Shinar. Now the country of Armenia, in some part of which the mountains of Ararat were situated, consists of two principal valleys or plains of inclination, viz. that of the Araxes towards the north and the east, and that of the Euphrates towards the south and the west; into one or the other of which flow all the streams of the country. In their descent into the plain country, therefore, the emigrants must have arrived, sooner or later, on the banks of one of these two rivers, and they would naturally have followed its course downwards, until they reached the point of their adopted residence. That it was not the Araxes on whose banks the company arrived is clear, the course of that river being not from the east but from the west; so that by following its stream, they would have been led, not into a plain, but into the mountainous country of Azerbaijan, and ere long to the banks of the Caspian. It would seem therefore that the Noachidæ could not have done otherwise than reach the banks of the Euphrates, and follow the course of that river downwards; and one has only to look at a map of Asia to see that the direction of the Euphrates, that is, of its eastern branch the Morad, or eastern Phrat, is for a great distance almost directly ‘from the east,’ from its source to the point where it turns abruptly to the southward; whence passing through a break in the chain of Mount Maurus, it pours its waters into the plains of Mesopotamia. Viewed in this light the historian’s words are perfectly reconciled with geographical verity, even though it be admitted that the sojourners afterwards turned, with the course of the river, to

3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they

had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

the south-east. Now the Agri-dagh before mentioned, ch. 8. 4, as is well known, stands in the valley of the Araxes; and is further cut off from all communication with the Euphrates, by an intermediate chain of mountains, and also by a tributary of the former river. Its claims, therefore, to the honour of being regarded as the place where the ark rested after the flood are far inferior to those of some elevation within the plain of inclination drained by the Euphrates. This precise spot it is now indeed difficult, if not impossible, to identify. But that such a situation was chosen for its resting-place as was best suited to accomplish the ends of the Most High in regard to the future settlement of the earth, is an inference which we cannot well help drawing from the tenor of the whole narrative. It is not difficult to suggest a number of reasons to show that the land of Shinar was the centre whence a thorough and entire distribution of the human race over the face of the whole earth could be most readily and conveniently made; and as the valley of the Euphrates was the route which, of all others, was the best suited to conduct the founders of post-diluvian society to the place so peculiarly fitted for their subsequent dispersion, we are warranted in supposing that the stranding of the ark occurred at some spot in the vicinity of that valley whence the descent was easy and free from the immense difficulties that must have impeded the passage down the declivities of the lofty Agri-dagh. Some part of the range of the Taurus along which the Euphrates runs would seem to include the spot likely to fulfil this condition; but only by personal investigation can it be determined what

particular locality in that chain will absolutely answer to the above description.

3. *Go to.* A mere hortatory interjection equivalent to our idiom 'Come, let us' do so and so.—¶ *Let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly.* Heb. *נשרפה לשרפה* *burn them to a burning.* The practical remark of Calvin on these words is peculiarly appropriate. 'Moses would intimate that they were not prompted to the work by the facilities that offered themselves; but that they were disposed to contend with great and arduous obstacles—a circumstance that went to enhance the greatness of the crime. For how could it be that they should thus wear and exhaust themselves in this laborious enterprise, unless because they had set themselves in a frenzied opposition to God? Difficulty often deters us from necessary works; but *they*, without stones or mortar, do not scruple to attempt an edifice that should transcend the clouds! Their example teaches us to what lengths ambition will urge men who give way to their unhallowed lustings.'—As to the material itself it is notorious that stone quarries are and ever have been utterly unknown throughout the whole region of Babylon while the soil, even to this day, is remarkably well fitted for making brick and abounds with bitumen, both solid and liquid, to a degree unparalleled in any other quarter of the globe. 'The soil of ancient Assyria and Babylon,' says Mr. Keppel, (*Travels in the East*, p. 73.) 'consists of a fine clay mixed with sand, with which, as the waters of the river retire, the shores are covered. This compost when dried by the heat of the sun, becomes a hard and solid mass and forms the finest materials for the

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heav-

a Deut. 1. 28.

beautiful bricks for which Babylon was so celebrated. We all put to the test the adaptation of this mud for pottery, by taking some of it while wet, from the bank of the river and then moulding it into any form we pleased. Having been exposed to the sun for half an hour it became as hard as stone'. So firm and durable were these bricks, that the remains of ancient walls which have been thrown down for centuries, have withstood the effect of the atmosphere to the present day, and still retain the inscriptions with which they were impressed—a species of arrow-headed character, which has of late greatly excited the attention of the learned. The text will be best understood by observing what materials are employed in those masses of ruin which, whether belonging to the original city and tower or not, are undoubtedly among the most ancient remains in the world. These bricks are of two sorts, one dried in the sun, the other burnt by the fire. When any considerable degree of thickness was required, the practice in the Babylonian structures seems to have been, to form the mass with sun-dried bricks, and then invest it with a case of burnt bricks. The ruins exhibit evident traces of this mode of construction, although, in the course of ages, the external covering of burnt bricks has been taken away for use in building. —¶ *Slime* had they for mortar. Or more properly, 'bitumen had they for cement;' as the word in this place undoubtedly denotes that remarkable mineral pitch to which the name of *bitumen* is given, and which is supposed to have been formed in the earth from the decomposition of animal and vegetable substances. It is

en; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

the most inflammable of known minerals. In its most fluid state it forms *naphtha*; and in its most solid, *asphaltum*, the word by which the Septuagint renders the Heb. חֶמֶר *hhemar*, the term answering to 'slime' in our translation. It is usually of a blackish or brown hue and hardens more or less on exposure to the air. Herodotus states that the Babylonians derived their supplies of this substance from a place called *Is*, the modern *Hit*, a small mud-walled town inhabited by Arabs and Jews on the western bank of the river. In its present state, the principal bitumen pit has two compartments divided by a wall, on one side of which bitumen bubbles up and oil of *naphtha* on the other. As it requires to be boiled with a certain proportion of oil before it can be used as a cement it is not much employed in building at the present day. The inhabitants of that region make use either of pure clay or mud for mortar, or certain kinds of calcareous earth found in great abundance in the desert west of the Euphrates.

4. *And they said, Go to.* We have here, if we mistake not, an instance of that trajection, or inverted order which is of such perpetual occurrence in Hebrew. As they would naturally counsel first respecting building the city before they thought of making bricks for the purpose, it cannot well be doubted that the verb here should be rendered in the pluperfect tense; 'For they *had* said,' &c. —¶ *Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven,* &c. Heb. וּרְאִשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם *and his head in the heavens*. A common hyperbolical expression denoting an exceedingly high tower—a sense that exonerates the builders from the impu-

ted stupidity of attempting to scale the heavens. Such phrases are found in every language and their meaning can scarcely be mistaken. In the sacred writers they occur repeatedly. Thus when the messengers whom Moses employed to espy out the land of Canaan returned and made their report, they described the cities which they had visited as 'great and walled up to heaven;' and Moses himself in his farewell address to the nation Deut. 9. 1, repeats it; 'Hear, O Israel, thou art to pass over Jordan this day to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven;' implying simply that the walls of those cities were uncommonly strong and lofty. It can scarcely be doubted that the ancient heathen fable of the attempt of the giants to climb the heavens owes its origin to some distorted traditions relative to this fact. The memory of the design of the builders of Babel being handed down, in its native boldness of expression, to nations unacquainted with the Mosaic history and with eastern language, who were also fond of the marvellous and skilful in fable, would very naturally give rise to the story of the 'Titans' war with heaven and the discomfiture which followed.—¶ *Let us make us a name, lest, &c.* A variety of fanciful conjectures as to the real design of this erection is cut off by this plain declaration of the inspired page. It could not have been, as Josephus and others suppose, to guard against a future flood; for this would have needed no divine interposition to prevent its having effect. God knew his own intention never to drown the world any more; and if it had been otherwise, or if they, from a disbelief of his promise, had been disposed to provide against it, they would not have been so foolish as to build for this purpose upon a *plain*, when the highest tower they could raise would have been far below

the tops of the mountains. Nor is there any sufficient evidence that it was designed as an idol's temple or a mere monument of architectural skill like the pyramids of Egypt. The words clearly show that their primary object was to transmit a name illustrious for grand design and bold undertaking to succeeding generations. In this sense the phrase 'to make one's self a name,' is used elsewhere in the Scriptures. Thus 'David *got him a name* when he returned from smiting the Syrians in the valley of Salt,' 2 Sam. 8. 13; and the prophet informs us Is. 63. 12, that the God of Israel 'led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm dividing the waters before them to *make to himself an everlasting name.*' But in connection with this they seem also to have cherished the design of founding a universal monarchy of which Babel was to be the metropolis, and to which all the families of the earth were to be in subjection. As a tower is but another name for a citadel, or place of defence, the project appears evidently to have had reference to some warlike movements, such as they should deem necessary for defending themselves against insurrections and enforcing the despotism which they proposed to establish. For the *mere* purpose of preventing dispersion it is not easy to see how such a building should have been required. Again, as this event in all probability took place in the life-time of Nimrod, the first individual who is recorded to have aspired to dominion over his fellow-men, and as it is expressly said of him that 'the beginning of his kingdom was Babel,' nothing is more natural than to suppose that he was the leader in this daring enterprise, and that it was in great measure a scheme of his for obtaining the mastery of the world. A grasping for universal dominion has been characteristic of almost all the great nations and conquerors of the earth in

5 <sup>b</sup> And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And the LORD said, Behold, <sup>c</sup> the people is one, and they have

b ch. 18. 21. c ch. 9. 19. Acts 17. 26.

all <sup>d</sup> one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have <sup>e</sup> imagined to do.

d ver. 1. e Ps. 2. 1.

later periods, and Babylon itself, though checked for the present by this divine interference, yet afterward resumed the pursuit of her favourite object; and in the time of Nebuchadnezzar seemed almost to have gained it. The style used by that monarch in his proclamation comported with this idea; 'To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and tongues.' Now if such has been the ambition of all Nimrod's successors in every age, it is nothing surprising that it should have struck the mind of Nimrod himself and his adherents. But it was evidently worthy of the divine wisdom to counteract such a high-handed scheme as this. As human nature is constituted, a universal monarchy would have been a universal despotism, than which a greater curse could not have befallen the earth. In every state of society where power or wealth is monopolized by one or a few, there is the greatest possible scope for injustice and oppression; and where these evils have the greatest sway, mankind being what they are, there they will inevitably most abound. While therefore they were intent upon this impious project and aiming to frustrate the appointed dispersion and distribution, the Most High determined to take them in their own craftiness, and by confounding their speech to accomplish the very event which they were so anxious to prevent. The means adopted were exactly suited to the end in view; for there is no more effectual boundary of nations than language. There is scarcely a great nation in the world, but what has its own language. The gradual dividing of languages was therefore in

effect the dividing of nations; and so a bar to the whole world being ruled by one government. Thus a perpetual miracle was wrought to be an antidote to a perpetual evil.—¶ *Lest we be scattered, &c.* The punctuation in our English Bibles in this part of the verse is not happy. It leads the reader to suppose that the fear of being scattered over the earth was to be obviated *solely* by making themselves a name; whereas this latter clause stands related equally to building the city and making a name. In conformity to the Hebrew there should have been a colon after 'name.'

5. *And the Lord came down, &c.* Evidently spoken of God after the manner of men, and in accommodation to our modes of conception. God's coming down is but another term for his *interposition*; and by his coming down to see is doubtless meant his *making it manifest* by the result that he was well aware of the doings of these impious and aspiring builders. From what is said below it will perhaps appear that the sense of this verse is not complete without taking v. 8, in connection.—¶ *Which the children of men have builded.* As the phrase 'children of men' is used in other cases in the Scriptures in opposition to the 'children of God,' some have inferred that the sons of Ham were exclusively concerned in this enterprise, men who had degenerated from the piety of their ancestors, and that neither Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, or Heber, or their immediate progeny had any agency in it. But since the natural order of the narrative leads us to suppose that 'the whole earth'



7 Go to, 'let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may <sup>g</sup> not understand one another's speech.

f ch. 1. 26. Ps. 2. 4. Acts 2. 4, 5, 6. g ch. 42. 23. Deut. 28. 49. Jer. 5. 15. 1 Cor. 14. 2, 11.

speaking one language denotes in general the same body of men who are afterwards said to have embarked in the undertaking, and as these undoubtedly constituted the *bulk* of the then existing race, it is hardly probable that such a distinction is here hinted at, although it may still be true that the individuals above mentioned may have stood aloof from it, and the Hamites under Nimrod may have been among its most active and conspicuous promoters.

6. *And the Lord said.* That is, as usual, said within himself. But we believe the true construction is to render this in the pluperfect 'for the Lord had said,' and to consider vs. 6, 7, as parenthetical, indicating the process of thought and purpose in the divine mind previous to his going down, as described in v. 5. This relieves us from the necessity of supposing a double descent and by connecting v. 5 with v. 8 makes the whole context perspicuous.—¶ *The people is one, and they have all one language.* Heb. 'one lip' No sense, we think, is better suited to the words than that given above of the *oneness* of their counsels, language, and mode of utterance. Comp. Gen. 34, 22.—¶ *And this they begin to do.* Heb. 'this is their beginning to do.'—¶ *Nothing will be restrained from them, &c.* Heb. 'there will not be cut off from them any thing which,' &c. Nothing will deter them from accomplishing their designs, unless they be at once miraculously arrested.

7. *That they may not understand one another's speech.* Heb. 'that they may not hear one another's lip.' The same original word 'lip' is studiously employ-

8 So <sup>h</sup> the LORD scattered them abroad from thence <sup>i</sup> upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

h Luke 1. 51. i ch. 10. 25, 32.

ed throughout the whole narrative, giving more and more confirmation to the sense which we have above affixed to it. That the Heb. word for 'hear' is often used in the sense of 'understand' might be shown from hundreds of passages. Thus Is. 36. 11, 'Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we *understand* (Heb. hear) it.' Gen. 42. 23, 'For they knew not that Joseph *understood* (Heb. heard) them.' So in the Gr. 1 Cor. 14. 2, 'He speaketh not unto men, for no man *understandeth* (Gr. heareth) him.' Thus too 1 Kings, 3. 9, an 'understanding heart' is in the original a 'hearing heart.'

8. *They left off to build the city.* And doubtless the tower also, though this be not expressly mentioned. It is worthy of note, that from the ancient Gentile traditions hereafter to be cited, respecting this event, it appears to have been a very prevailing opinion that the divine interposition on this occasion was attended by a tremendous tempest of thunder, lightning, and wind. The same belief appears to have been adopted by the Hebrews; at least the Jew Benjamin (*Bochart, Phaleg*, lib. i. c. 9.) asserts, that fire from heaven fell upon the centre of the tower, and split it through down to the very foundation. But though the building may have been thus supernaturally assailed, yet there is no sufficient ground for supposing that it was actually overturned or destroyed. Of an edifice so vast the materials could not be dissipated without a miracle, alike superfluous and unrecorded in Scripture; for the sacred writer merely tells us that 'they left off to build the city,' and its probable pyr-

amidal form would naturally tend to insure perpetuity. The tower itself then, though its external brick-work might partially have suffered, no doubt continued in existence till the time of Nebuchadnezzar; just as the Egyptian pyramids still remain, though ages have rolled over the heads of those deserted buildings. Such being the case, the second founder of Babylon, even independent of religious motives, would find it a more easy task to repair and finish the tower of Nimrod, than either wholly to remove its materials or to work them afresh in erecting a new structure. Accordingly in the midst of that far-famed city, as we learn from the Greek historians, there rose an enormous tower, dedicated to the god Belus, bearing on its surmount his temple or sacellum. It was composed of eight square towers or stories, of successively diminishing size, piled one upon the other, with an ascent of steps on the outside winding up to each tower, and of very ample breadth. By comparing together the two accounts of Herodotus and Strabo, we learn that each side of its base measured a stadium or furlong (500 feet) in length, and that it was also a stadium in height, which makes it considerably higher than the largest of the Egyptian pyramids, though standing upon a much narrower base. From the same authorities we learn that it stood in the midst of a court or enclosure which was two stadia square. The question then arises whether a building of such vast bulk was the entire work of Nebuchadnezzar, after having previously removed the remains of the work of Nimrod; or whether it was not, in reality, the original structure, repaired and finished and beautified. With Prideaux and other sensible writers, we think there can be little doubt how we ought to decide the point. As the original edifice was probably for the most part solid, such a vast mass of sun-dried and kiln-burnt

bricks would not fall to decay, like a Grecian or Roman temple of modern masonry, nor would time render it incapable of being very effectually repaired. That it was so repaired there is the strongest reason to believe, and consequently that the tower described by Herodotus was not the original 'tower of Babel' here mentioned, but that tower re-edified from its ruins and freshly adorned by Nebuchadnezzar. Whether any traces now remain of this prodigious structure, and if so, where they are to be sought for, is a question of somewhat difficult solution. Three distinct masses of ruin in the region of Babylon have been claimed by different writers as entitled to this distinction; viz. *Nimrod's Tower* at Akkerkoof; the *Mujelibee* about 950 yards east of the Euphrates, and five miles above the modern town of Hillah; and the *Birs Nemroud* to the west of that river and about six miles to the south-east of Hillah. Niebuhr, Porter, and Rossmüller concur with the traditions of the country in fixing upon the latter as the probable site of this earliest great work of man. 'The Birs Nimrod,' says Mr. Rich, 'is a mound of an oblong form, the total circumference of which is 762 yards. At the eastern side it is cloven by a deep furrow, and is not more than 50 or 60 feet high: but on the western side it rises in a conical figure to the elevation of 198 feet, and on its summit is a solid pile of brick, 37 feet by 28 in breadth, diminishing in thickness to the top, which is broken and irregular, and rent by a large fissure extending through a third of its height. The fire-burnt bricks have inscriptions on them, and so excellent is the cement, that it is nearly impossible to extract one whole. The other parts of the summits of this hill are occupied by immense fragments of brick-work of no determinate figure, tumbled together, and converted into solid vitrified masses, as if they had undergone the

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel, \*because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

10 ¶ These *are* the generations of Shem: Shem *was* an

k 1 Cor. 14. 23. 1 ch. 10. 22. 1 Chron. 1. 17.

action of the fiercest fire.' In regard to this latter appearance, Sir R. K. Porter has no doubt that the effect was produced by fire acting from above, and that it was probably lightning. The circumstance is remarkable in connection with the tradition that the original tower of Babel was rent and overthrown by fire from heaven. At any rate it cannot now be seen without bringing to mind the emphatic prophecy of Jeremiah, ch. 51. 25, 'I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a *burnt mountain*.'—It may be remarked that very striking testimonies to the event here recorded are to be found in several ancient profane authors. Josephus quotes from one of the Sybilline oracles the following words; 'When all mankind spoke the same language, some of them elevated a tower immensely high, as if they would ascend up into heaven; but the gods sent a wind and overthrew the tower, and assigned to each a particular language; and hence the city of Babylon derived its name.' Abydenus, as quoted by Eusebius, uses similar language; 'There are who relate, that the first men, born of the earth (giants), when they grew proud of their strength and stature, supposing that they were more excellent than the gods, wickedly attempted to build a tower where Babylon now stands. But the work advancing towards heaven, was overthrown upon the builders by the gods, with the

hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood:

11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

12 And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, <sup>m</sup> and begat Salah.

m Luke 3. 36.

assistance of the winds; and the name Babylon was imposed upon the ruins. Till that period men were of one language; but then the gods sent among them a diversity of tongues. And then commenced the war between Saturn and Titan.' Finally Eupolemus as cited by Alexander Polyhistor, affirms, 'That the city of Babylon was first built by giants who escaped from the flood; that these giants built the most famous tower in all history; and that the tower was dashed in pieces by the almighty power of God, and the giants dispersed and scattered over the face of the whole earth.'

10. *These are the generations, &c.* As appears from the preceding chapter, this is but a *partial* catalogue of Shem's descendants; and such was all that the writer's object required, which was merely to introduce the history of Abraham by tracing up his pedigree to Shem. The effect of the flood in shortening the term of human life is very perceptible on a comparison of this table with that given chap. 5. 9—27.—  
¶ *An hundred years old.* Heb. *בן מאה שנה* *son of an hundred years*; and thus uniformly where the same English word occurs.

11. *Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years.* From which it appears that this venerable patriarch had not only seen Methusaleh and Lamech before the flood, and Abraham after it, but that he was cotemporary with Isaac for fifty years.

13 And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

14 And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:

15 And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

16 <sup>a</sup> And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat <sup>o</sup> Peleg:

17 And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:

19 And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat <sup>p</sup> Serug.

21 And Reu lived after he be-

gat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:

23 And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat <sup>q</sup> Terah.

25 And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

26 And Terah lived seventy years, and <sup>r</sup> begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 ¶ Now these *are* the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran: and Haran begat Lot.

28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

<sup>q</sup> Luke, 3. 34. <sup>r</sup> Josh. 24. 2. <sup>1</sup> Chron. 1. 26.

12. *And Arphaxad lived.* The Septuagint here inserts a second Cainan, with an addition of one hundred and thirty years. This is followed by Luke 3. 36, who brings in the same person in the same way. But the Heb. text both here and in 1 Chron. 1, is perfectly silent on this subject, and the best chronologists have agreed in rejecting it as a spurious generation.

26 *And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.* That is, began to beget; he was seventy years old before he had any children, and then had three sons one after another. But these sons are not set down in the order of their birth; for though Abram is first named it does not follow that he was the first born, any more than Shem's being first named among the sons of Noah, Gen. 9. 18, proves him to have been the eldest of

them. In both cases the youngest stands first on the ground of *superior dignity*. By comparing ver. 32 of this chapter with ch. 12. 4, it is obvious that Abraham was born, not when Terah was 70, but when he was 130 years old, which was 350 years after the flood, or A. M. 2008. Haran was undoubtedly the eldest son.

28. *Haran died before his father.* Heb.

פני-פני *before the face of his father*, or in his presence, while his father was yet living—the same phrase in the original which occurs Ex. 20. 3, 'Thou shalt have no other gods *before me* (פני-פני).' —¶ *In Ur of The Chaldees.* Heb.

באור כשדרם *be-Oor Kasdim*. This is the first mention which the Scriptures make of the Kasdim or Chaldeans. Who these people really were, and whether they ever properly existed as a nation, is, as Heeren remarks one

of the most difficult problems which history presents. From eastern analogy, it seems most probable that the *Kasdim* of the Scriptures translated *Chaldeans*, was a general name among the Shemitic nations for the *northern barbarians*, though descended doubtless from כֶּסֶד *Kesed* (*Chesed*) the son of Nahor, and grandson of Terah, Gen. 22. 22. If so, the Chaldees here mentioned had not this name in the time of *which* Moses speaks, but they were so called at the time *in which* he wrote. The term is used therefore by anticipation. At all events it is certain that the conquering Chaldeans forced their way from the north, where their various hordes wandered over the steppes of Mesopotamia, and finally overwhelmed southern Asia, making themselves masters of the Syrian and Babylonian plains, to which fact it is owing that the same country is indiscriminately called *Babylonia* and *Chaldea*. The reader who wishes for a fuller view of this subject is referred to Gesenius on Is. 33. 13, where the fragments of the earlier history of this people will be found collected. Of this an abstract is given in Robinson's edition of Calmet. The learned German commentator seeks the original seat of the Chaldeans in the mountains of Kurdistan, now inhabited by the Kurds (pron. Koords), who are probably their successors; and conjectures that they were brought from their native regions by the Assyrians as mercenaries, after which they settled in the plains till they became strong enough to bring their employers themselves into subjection. From their being much addicted to astronomy, and probably to judicial astrology, hence all astrologers were, in process of time, called *Chaldeans*, Dan. 2. 2—5.—As to the city here mentioned, some difficulty has been experienced by commentators in fixing its site, but in the East it is generally identified with the present town of *Orfah* in Upper

Mesopotamia, two days' journey east of the Euphrates, sixty-seven miles north-east of Beer. The Jews, according to Mr. Wolff, still call the place by the name in the text אֹר כַּשְׁדִּים *Oor Kasdim*, or *Ur* of the Chaldees, and it is a place of pilgrimage as the birth-place of Abraham, in whose honour the Moslems have a fine mosque, in the court of which is a lake teeming with fish which are held sacred to the patriarch and not permitted to be caught. Its ancient name אֹר *Oor*, which signifies *light* or *fire*, probably derived its name from the idolatry of the *Ignicolists* or *fire-worshippers*, which was there established. The primitive name of the city was changed by the Macedonians when they became possessed of it to Edessa, and under that name was the capital of a territory called *Osroene*, occupying the northern and most fruitful part of Mesopotamia, and which, for several centuries before Christ formed an independent kingdom. Its last king was Abgarus, of whom there is a well known tradition that he wrote a letter to Christ to which he received an answer. The place afterwards passed successively through the hands of the Romans, the Saracens, the Crusaders, the Tartars, and was ultimately conquered by the Turks. It is now the seat of a pashalic, and is a large and tolerably well-built town, situated on the eastern side of a hill, defended by a castle, and composed of stone-houses of as good masonry, and as highly ornamented, as those of Aleppo. Mr. Buckingham (*Travels in Mesopotamia*, vol. i. p. 89) describes the city in general as being a delightful place, and the most tolerable and happy in the Turkish dominions. It is a place of considerable trade, having numerous and well-filled bazaars, and enjoying the advantage of being one of the principal stations on the great caravan route between Aleppo and Bagdad. The population is



29 And Al ram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was <sup>s</sup> Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife <sup>t</sup> Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

30 But <sup>u</sup> Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah <sup>w</sup> took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Ha-

s ch. 17. 15. & 20. 12. t ch. 22. 20. u ch. 16. 1, 2. & 18. 11, 12. w ch. 12. 1.

probably from 2000 to 2500, of whom 2000 are Armenian and Jacobite Christians, and the rest Moslems.

29. *Daughter of Haran.* From this it is clear, as before remarked, that Haran was the eldest of the three sons of Terah. His daughter Milcah was the grand-mother of Rebekah, the wife of Isaac. Gen. 22. 20, 23.—¶ *Father of Milcah and father of Iscah.* The Jewish writers generally maintain, and we think with great probability, that Iscah and Sarah are but different names of the same person; the one having been born before she left Chaldean, the other after. How this is to be reconciled with ch. 20. 12, see in loc.

31. *And Terah took Abram his son, &c.* It is evident from ch. 12. 1, that this expedition was undertaken in consequence of the divine call to Abraham to come out from a land of idolators; but from the deference paid to the head of a family Terah is here represented as chief in the movement, though really acting in obedience to the monitions of his son. Nahor and his wife Milcah, it would appear, were unwilling to go, at least at present; yet as we find them in the course of the history settled at Haran, and Abraham and Isaac sending to them for wives, we may conclude that they afterwards 'repented and went.' Thus the whole of Terah's family, though they did not go to Canaan, yet were probably re-

ran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from <sup>x</sup> Ur of the Chaldees, to go into <sup>y</sup> the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

x Neh. 9. 7. Acts. 7. 4. y ch. 10. 19.

served from Chaldean idolatry, and fixing themselves in Haran maintained for a considerable time the worship of the true God.—The narrative suggests to us, that while the most exemplary marks of respect are due from children to parents, yet parents themselves may sometimes be called to follow their children as leaders, when they have obtained clearer light as to the path of duty, and go forth at the evident call of God. But even in such cases a proper spirit of filial reverence will give as much precedency as possible to parental action.—¶ *To go into the land of Canaan.* As this expedition of Terah was undertaken in consequence of God's call to Abraham, and as the apostle tells us that Abraham went forth 'not knowing whither he went,' we are to understand these words as expressive rather of the *divine destination* than of their own definite purpose. They simply confided themselves to the guidance of heaven, resolving to go wherever a directing providence should lead, and the historian, speaking as a historian, names the country, unknown to them, to which their journeyings tended. This information was afterwards given to Abraham, but at what precise time we know not.—¶ *Came unto Haran and dwelt there.* Probably on account of the increasing age and infirmities of Terah. This name affords an instance of the confusion which has arisen in the

proper names of our translation, from its having been chosen to give the letter  $\text{ך}$  *ch* a power equivalent to  $\text{ח}$  *h*. It ought to be *Charan*, as it is in Acts 7. 2, where the Greek text (*Χάραρ*) has properly represented the Hebrew  $\text{חָרָן}$  *Charan*. The same course is adopted by the translation in numerous other instances. The place in question, which was called *Charraë* by the Romans, would seem to the English reader to have derived its name from Haran the father of Lot, but this can hardly be, as the Hebrew words are entirely different, the name of the place beginning with  $\text{ך}$  *ch*, and that of the person with  $\text{ח}$  *h*. This shows the evil of the method adopted by the English translators of representing both letters by our *h*. Its situation is fixed by Rennell about 30 miles S. S. E. from Orfah on the direct route from Mesopotamia to Palestine, on a brook known to the Greek writers by the same name, which flows into the river Chaboras, one of the tributaries of the Euphrates. It anciently carried on an extensive trade with the Tyrians, Ezek. 27. 23; and in more recent times became famous among the Romans for the total defeat of their army by the Parthians, and the death of Crassus their general, who was killed in the battle. It is now a poor place, mostly in ruins, in the occupation of a few families of Bedouin Arabs, who have been drawn thither by its rather abundant supply of water. Their presence renders a visit so unpleasant that no travellers have recently been there. It must early have fallen into ruins, as it seems to have been quite desolate when the Jew, Benjamin of Tudela, travelled through Mesopotamia in the twelfth century.

32. *The days of Terah were two hundred and five years.* This affords a satisfactory clew to the time of Abraham's birth; for if 75 years, which was his age when his father died, and when he left Haran, ch. 12. 4, be de-

ducted from 205, it is clear that he was born when his father was 130, that is, 60 years after his brother Haran. — *¶ And Terah died in Haran.* Many of God's people have died upon journeys. It is well to be prepared for the summons whenever and wherever it may meet us.

REMARKS.—(1.) We see in the conduct of the builders of Babel a striking exemplification of the spirit which actuates so large a portion of the human race. They were urged on by a desire of distinction—'Go to, let us make ourselves a name.' They thought that by raising this city and tower they should immortalize themselves, and be famed for their wisdom and exploits to the remotest generations. And what other principle than this is the moving spring of the actions of countless multitudes of men in all ages? What is it but the desire of fame that impels the warrior to the field of battle? What has greater influence on the scholar and the philosopher, or more forcibly animates them in their researches after knowledge? What is it that actuates the rich in constructing and decorating their splendid edifices, but a desire to display their opulence and win eclat from their fellow-men? It would not perhaps be right to condemn the principle in the abstract, or to hold it up to unqualified reprobation. Provided we seek distinction as a secondary object, in subservience to higher ends, as a means of augmenting our usefulness and bringing a larger revenue of glory to God, it may be a commendable motive of action. But alas! how seldom does it exist in this form? How much more frequently does it assume the character of a vain-glorious ambition, and engage its possessor in schemes as contrary to the will, or at least to the approbation, of heaven, as that of the infatuated projectors here mentioned? How vain the hope by which such men are deluded, and how certain are they to build a Babel to their own confusion.

(2.) How liable are the schemes of ungodly men to be interrupted and defeated in the midst of their execution. The builders of Babel had made considerable progress and were doubtless anticipating the satisfaction they should experience in its completion. But they were arrested in mid career. And thus it is that high-raised worldly expectations are generally disappointed. The eager aspirants for happiness form their plans; they prosecute their designs; they advance in their prospects; partial success animates them to more diligent exertions; but sooner or later God stops them in their progress, and either dashes all their labours to the dust, or says to them, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.' When they are saying 'peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as a thief in the night, or as travail upon a woman with child.' Consider too the means which God took to effect his purpose in this instance. They were *the most unlooked for* that could be imagined. The people engaged in the work might conceive it possible that they should be stopped by quarrels among themselves, or by another deluge, or by fire from heaven; but could they have entertained the remotest idea of such an interruption as they experienced? And thus does God generally interpose to disappoint the expectations of worldly men! He has ten thousand ways in which to render their plans abortive or to embitter to them the very things in which they have sought their happiness. We have laboured for honour and distinction. He suffers us perhaps to attain our wishes; and then makes our elevation a source of nothing but disquietude and pain. Many have looked for enjoyment in the acquisition of a partner or a family, who after a time would give the world perhaps to loose the indissoluble knot, or to have been 'written childless in the earth.' In short the

Governor of the universe is never at a loss for means to confound the devices of the wise or frustrate the counsels of the ungodly.

(3.) What fearful consequences does bold impiety frequently draw after it! Discomfited rebellion does not always plague merely its original authors. We are at the present day suffering grievously under the curse inflicted on the builders of Babel. Difference of language has not only placed obstacles in the way of commercial intercourse, but has given occasion to contiguous or distant nations to consider each other as enemies. It has moreover, been the means of excluding the greater part of the world from all the advantages of revelation. And if a benevolent person, desirous of diffusing the knowledge of Christ among the heathen, engage in the arduous undertaking, he must first partially lose several years before he can attain competent knowledge of the languages in which he is to address them. Even then he labours under the greatest disadvantages in speaking to them; and after all he must limit his exertions to two or three nations at the utmost. Multitudes who would gladly encounter labour and fatigue in the service of their fellow-creatures are discouraged by these difficulties, and are compelled to restrain their benevolent wishes through a conscious incapacity to carry them into effect. Suffering then as we do for the transgression of these builders, we ought at least to shun a repetition of their sins and to beware of the soaring of an unsanctified ambition.

(4.) How vain is it to fight against God. God had one purpose and they another. It was his intention that the earth should be peopled by their distributing themselves over its surface, while they presumptuously cherished the resolve to remain concentrated on a single spot. This was the issue joined, and how equitable, easy, and complete was the

triumph of omnipotence! 'In the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.' How signally did he overrule the event to compass the very ends which they were bent upon defeating! And with equal facility will he always ease and avenge him of his adversaries. The prophet Obadiah 3, 4, has furnished us with a thread of reflection which cannot fail to conduct us to the right use which we ought to make of this remarkable narrative. He has pronounced the application of the subject. 'The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.' Had the prophet stood by and witnessed the project in its proud advance and its disastrous termination, he could scarcely have painted their presumption, their folly, and their disgrace in more striking language. Let us then beware of engaging in any enterprise or indulging in any spirit which will expose us to a like discomfiture and humiliation.

## CHAPTER XII.

The important objects which divine wisdom proposed to accomplish by calling Abraham out from among a nation of idolaters and making him the head of a peculiar chosen race, rendered it proper that his vocation and subsequent history should be detailed with great minuteness. Accordingly we find that while the history of the world from the creation to the flood, comprising a period of 1656 years, is despatched in the compass of six chapters, no less than nineteen chapters are devoted to the account of Abraham, although his life covered only the space of 175 years. —By way of introduction to the history of this remarkable personage we may

observe, that although from the time of the fall down to the termination of the world, man lives under one and the same system of divine grace, yet that system divides itself into three successive dispensations, each differently characterized according to the condition of the world during the period in which it prevailed and the object which it had more immediately in view. These, are (1.) the Patriarchal; (2.) the Levitical; (3.) the Christian; all which are really but component parts of one great system, of which Christ is from first to last the sun and the centre. As the Patriarchal dispensation was marked by a sufficient degree of the light of divine truth to have conducted *all* men to heaven, had they not wilfully perverted their ways and turned aside from the revealed will of God, its characteristic or genius therefore was *universality*. Adam after the creation and Noah after the flood, would severally communicate to *all* their children and their children's children the knowledge which themselves possessed respecting God's gracious purposes; and as no intimation is given that this knowledge was to be confined to a particular family, it was clearly *intended* to be universal, and it it failed of becoming so *effectively*, the fault was in man himself. But in respect to the Levitical dispensation the case was essentially different. A single people was to be chosen out of the corrupt mass in order that they might be the depositaries of the truth, and as this nation was to be descended from a selected head, God was pleased at the proper time to call his servant Abraham from among the idolatrous *Kasdim* and to commit to him a fresh religious dispensation. Of this dispensation therefore *particularity* was the leading feature; and this is strikingly alluded to in one of Balaam's predictions delivered to Balak, Num. 33. 9, 'From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; lo, the people shall dwell *alone*,

## CHAPTER XII.

**N**OW the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy

a ch. 15. 7. Neh. 9. 7. Isa. 41. 2. Acts 7. 3.  
Heb. 11. 8.

and shall not be reckoned among the nations.' The house of Israel was accordingly long kept in a secluded state, the depository of God's word and promises; but as the time drew near when the day-spring from on high was to visit the earth, this characteristic began to be withdrawn from the Levitical church, as far as it could be without destroying altogether its distinctive constitution. The Sun of righteousness was about to rise upon the Gentiles, and like the natural sun he was preceded by a twilight. Through the medium of the Babylonish captivity, the truth was carried far into the East. By the emigrations of numerous Jews into Egypt it was borne into that country, where, as elsewhere, the translation of the Scriptures into Greek, offered facilities for the acquisition of divine knowledge not hitherto enjoyed by the Pagans; and many foreign proselytes to the worship of Jehovah were received in increasing numbers into the pale of the Jewish communion. Thus the way was prepared for the last and crowning dispensation of God's mercy viz. that of Christianity, whose genius still more eminently than that of Patriarchism is *universal*, and which is destined to work powerfully but silently till eventually the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

1. *The Lord had said unto Abram.* Heb. אַבְרָם *Abram*, a word compounded of אָב *father* and רַם *high*, importing a *high*, i. e. an eminent or distinguished, *progenitor* of a race. If the name were bestowed by his parents, which is perhaps doubtful, it was probably under the prompting of the spirit of prophecy, as it is difficult to con-

ceive, on any other ground, the reason of its selection.—As to the time of Abraham's receiving the call here mentioned, although some commentators refer it to the period of his sojourn in Haran, after his father's death, yet upon comparing the words of Stephen, Acts 7. 2—4, with the narrative of Moses, it would appear that the supposition is untenable. Stephen expressly says, 'The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, *before he dwelt in Charan* (Haran), and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country,' &c. The rendering in our version, therefore, '*had said*,' is undoubtedly correct, though it is still possible that the call may have been *repeated* during his sojourn at the latter place.—As to the manner in which the call was made, we have no other clew to it than is contained in the words of Stephen, who says that the 'God of glory' appeared to him, and as this phrase usually has reference to some *visible manifestation* of the divine glory, such as was witnessed in the Shekinah that dwelt between the cherubim and above the mercy-seat, it is not unlikely that some display of this kind was now granted to Abraham. Whatever it were, it was some *efficient* disclosure of the divine majesty and glory which at once sufficed to wean his heart from his former idolatries, and in connection with the command, to prompt him to abandon his country and kindred, and travel to a distant unknown region. A heart-affecting view of the divine glory has always a powerful loosening influence upon the ties which bind the heart to the world and to sin.—That the family of Terah was infected with the prevailing idola-



2<sup>b</sup> And I will make of thee a great nation, <sup>c</sup>and I will bless

<sup>b</sup> ch. 17. 6. & 18. 18. Deut. 26. 5. 1 Kings 3. 8.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 24. 35.

try is evident from the express declaration of Joshua, ch. 24. 2, that 'they served other gods;' and though it can scarcely be supposed that the land of Canaan was entirely free from the same corruption, yet it would seem from the case of Melchizedek that it did not there so universally abound; and at any rate, the patriarch might more easily avoid it among strangers, than among his former associates.—¶ *Get thee out.*

Heb. *ךָ-לְךָ* go for thyself; i. e. go for thine own advantage; go thou, even if no one will go with thee. Yet it is evident from the context, that if he could persuade his family and friends to accompany him he was at liberty to do it, and not only so, but that he actually succeeded in inducing a large part of his father's house to be his companions. God is not wont to put restrictions upon the efforts of his chosen to prevail upon all in their power to cast in their lot with them in travelling to that better country to which he calls them; nor can the benevolent heart be content to leave any behind. Abraham therefore was to go from his country and kindred and his father's house only in case they would not go with him.

—¶ *Unto a land that I will shew thee.* He was to leave all and to go he knew not whither. Had he been told it was to a land flowing with milk and honey and that he should be put in possession of it, the trial to his faith would have been far less. But it was not so. That which was promised was not only promised in general terms, but was very *distant*. God did not even tell him he would *give* him the land, but merely *shew* it to him. Nor did he in his lifetime obtain the possession of it. He was only a sojourner in it; without so much as a place to set his foot upon.

thee, and make thy name great; <sup>d</sup>and thou shalt be a blessing:

<sup>d</sup> ch. 28. 4. Gal. 3. 14.

He obtained a spot indeed in which to lay his bones; but this was all. The Apostle however, Heb. 11. 8, lays open the secret of his obedience. 'By *faith* Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out not knowing whither he went.'

2. *And I will make of thee a great nation, &c.* The promise had reference to things which could be but of small account to an eye of sense, but faith would find enough in it to satisfy the most enlarged desires. The objects though distant, were worth waiting for. He should be the father of 'a great nation;' not only by the vast multiplication of his natural seed, but God's making them a select peculiar people, to be distinguished by signal favours above all other nations. They should be the Lord's people.—¶ *I will bless thee.* The leading import of the divine 'blessing' is an *abundant increase* or *multiplication* of favours, both temporal and spiritual. The 'curse' of God on the other hand is a *privation* of all good, and the *imposition* of numerous positive evils upon those who are its subjects. 'The *blessing* of the Lord maketh *rich*, and addeth *no sorrow* with it,' Prov. 10. 22. While of the wicked it is said, 'Give them *sorrow* of heart, thy *curse* unto them,' Lam. 3. 65.—¶ *I will make thy name great.* Not so much in the records of worldly fame, as in the history of the church. Yet it is a remarkable fact, that perhaps no mere man has ever been so widely and so permanently honoured. 'The Jews, and many tribes of the Saracens and Arabians, justly own and revere him as their progenitor: many nations in the

3 • And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that

e ch. 27. 29. Exod. 23. 22. Num. 24. 9.

East exceedingly respect his memory to this day, and glory in their real or pretended relation to him. Throughout the visible church he has always been highly venerated; and even now Jews, Mohammedans, and many Gentiles vie with each other and with Christians, who shall most honour this ancient patriarch! Nothing could be more improbable at the time, than this event; yet the prediction has been fulfilling, most exactly and minutely, during the course of almost four thousand years! *Scott.*—¶ *Thou shalt be a blessing.* That is, thou shalt be so signally and pre-eminently blessed, as to be, as it were, converted into a blessing; thou shalt be all blessing; a blessing in thyself, and a source of blessing to others. The phrase is in the highest degree emphatic, and in this sense the promise has been abundantly fulfilled; for all the true blessedness which the world is now, or shall be hereafter possessed of, is owing instrumentally to Abraham and his posterity. Through them we have a Bible, a Saviour, and a Gospel. They are the stock on which the Christian church is grafted. Their very dispersions and punishments have proved the riches of the world. How signally then has this promise to the father of the faithful been fulfilled. What a far more illustrious greatness his, than that which has pertained to the kings and conquerors of the earth! While their great names have been acquired principally by deeds that have made them plagues and curses to mankind, to Abraham belongs the honour and happiness of having been *great in goodness*, great in communicating light and life to his species. Such was the hope of his calling; and yet, as if all this were not enough, it is added—

curseth thee: ' and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

f ch. 13. 18. & 22. 13. & 26. 4. Ps. 72. 17. Acts, 3. 25. Gal. 3. 8.

3. *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.* Heb. מְבָרְכֶיךָ אֶעֱרָא *those that make light of thee will I curse.* This is language never used but of an object of special favour. It is declaring that he should not only be blessed himself, but that all others should be blessed or cursed as they respected or injured him and his seed. Of this the histories of Abimelech, Laban, Potiphar, Pharaoh, Balak, and Balaam furnish striking examples. The original, from the root בָּרַךְ, signifies *to account and treat as light, vile, worthless, contemptible*, an idea not perhaps exactly expressed by the English word *curse*, the leading import of which is *imprecation of evil*. But as such a contemptuous or disparaging treatment would be a direct affront to God himself, he here affirms that those who were guilty of it should incur his *curse* as a proper penalty; and the *curse* of heaven is but another name for the *positive infliction* of fearful judgments. See note on Gen. 3. 14. Such an assurance is the highest pledge of friendship and favour that can be given, and sets forth the privileges of the Lord's chosen in the most impressive light. The strictest leagues and covenants of kings and princes contain no stronger bond of alliance than the engagement to regard each other's friends and enemies as *common friends and enemies*. —¶ *In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* Common usage as it respects the bearing of the Heb. preposition בְּ will allow us to render בְּךָ *by thee* instead of *in thee*; i. e. by or through thee as a medium all nations shall be ultimately blessed. The apostle's exposition Gal. 3. 8, 16, does not essentially militate with this, though it brings the promise into a narrower

4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him: and Abram

was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

compass, and makes it to be emphatically in Christ the appointed and pre-eminent seed of Abraham. In him was the gospel of salvation to be preached to all nations, to Gentiles as well as to Jews, and the very communication of such tidings could not but be a blessing to all the families and tribes of the earth, even though it should be supposed to be made *effectual* only to a part of them; which is all that is necessarily to be inferred from the words. The passage contains a clear intimation of what God himself, whose judgment is according to truth, regards as the source of the truest and richest blessings to the children of men. It is not wealth, fame, power, sensual pleasure, or mental endowments, but the gift of his own Son as a Saviour, the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, the pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and the high and purifying hopes connected with eternal life. This is the inheritance that makes us truly rich, and utterly vain, foolish, and fatal is it to seek for real *blessedness* from any other source.

4. So Abram departed as the Lord had said unto him. No sooner did Abraham receive the divine command than he obeyed it. When acting in the ordinary affairs of life, and from mere worldly considerations, prudence may dictate delay, and the propriety of consulting friendly advice; but when the call is evidently from above, when the direction is clearly from God, to be dilatory is to be disobedient. Faith is prompt in compliance and makes haste to execute the will of our heavenly Master. Though the journey to be undertaken was above three hundred miles in length, and rendered formidable by deserts, high mountains, and thick for-

ests, yet the patriarch implicitly put himself under the conduct of that providence whose summons had called him forth, and following its leadings bade defiance to difficulty and danger. We cannot fail to observe in this remarkable event (1.) *The display of the divine sovereignty.* Why was Abraham thus distinguished above all other of the sons of men, to be called out from a nation of idolaters, and made such a signal blessing to the world? The Scripture affords us no reason to conclude that he was better than his associates. He and all his family were idolaters, and so were all around him. Yet he was selected from among them, and made the friend and favourite of heaven. What account can be given of this? Can it be traced to any thing but the sovereign will and pleasure of Jehovah? Even granting—what can by no means be proved to have been the fact—that he was more faithful to the monitions of natural conscience than the mass of the heathens of Chaldaea, and that he did not go to the same extent in upholding a false worship, yet he cannot well be conceived to have been *so far* superior to his countrymen in moral qualities as to have entitled him to such a distinction as he received. So that in any view we are still compelled to recognise the discriminating grace of God in his call, and to say in regard to it, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' (2.) *The self-denying zeal of Abraham.* He undoubtedly felt the attachment which all men usually feel to their native land. It was the same trial to him as to others to leave the scenes of his childhood and the abode of his kindred. At the age of seventy-five the spirit of adventure was doubt-

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and <sup>s</sup> the souls that they had gotten <sup>h</sup> in Haran; and they went forth to go into the

g ch. 14. 14. h ch. 11. 31.

less in a great measure quelled, his habits fixed, and his partialities riveted to the land of his birth. To tear himself away from his accustomed haunts and occupations, to turn his back upon his friends and kindred, and to go to a distant and unknown land, and there seek a habitation among strangers, perhaps enemies, must have put his fortitude to a test of which we can form but a very imperfect idea. Yet we, like Abraham, are to consider ourselves sojourners, called to go from a dark and idolatrous world into a land of promise. And if we are of his seed we shall do his works. We shall, if bidden to forsake all and follow Christ, part with father and mother, brethren and sisters, country and kindred, and renounce every enjoyment that may stand between us and duty.

5. *All their substance.* Heb. רכושם אשר רכשו *their acquisition which they had acquired*; a term applied in a general way to money, cattle, or effects of any kind.—¶ *And the souls that they had gotten.* Heb. הוּפֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה הַנֶּפֶשׁ *the soul (collect. sing. for souls, i. e. persons) which they had made.* The original word for *made* (עָשָׂה) very frequently bears the sense of *acquisition, accumulation*, equivalent to the Eng. usage, when we say 'a man makes money,' i. e. *acquires* or *amasses* wealth. Thus Gen. 1. 12, 'The fruit tree yielding fruit;' Heb. 'the fruit tree making fruit.' Luke, 19. 18, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds;' Gr. 'bath made five pounds.' Deut. 8.

land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 ¶ And Abram <sup>i</sup> passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, <sup>k</sup> unto the plain of Moreh. <sup>l</sup> And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.

i Heb. 11. 9. k Deut. 11. 30. Judg. 7. 1. l ch. 10. 18, 19. & 13. 7.

17, 'My power hath gotten me this wealth;' Heb. 'hath made.' Eccl. 12. 12, 'Of making many books there is no end;' i. e. of the business of collecting or amassing books there is no end. Abram's making souls therefore is doubtless to be understood of his enlarging his household establishment, of his gradually gathering around him a train of domestics and followers who were disposed to cast in their lot with him some from one motive and some from another, and to whom he probably imparted those great religious truths respecting God and his worship which had obtained a lodgment in his own mind. Though the sense of *making proselytes* is not conveyed by the words in their primary meaning, yet they are expressly thus rendered in the Jerusalem Targum, and the Chaldee Paraphrase has, 'All the souls which he had subdued unto the law;' and the fact that Abraham is afterwards said to have had three hundred and eighteen trained (Heb. catechized) servants in his house, as well as his acknowledged character as a pious man, makes the supposition altogether probable. The true sense of the phrase at any rate so nearly approximates to this, that we cannot hesitate to adduce the example of Abraham as an admonition to us, that wherever the providence of God shall place us, there we are to labour to be 'makers of souls,' to gain proselytes to our heavenly master, to increase to the utmost the number of those who shall devote themselves to his fear and service.

6. *And Abram passed through the land* Heb. בארץ *in the land*. The import is not so much that of passing in a direct line from one point to another, as of passing to and fro from place to place, or sojourning after the manner of the nomades till a district has been thoroughly traversed. It was thus that Abraham passed through the land of promise, surveying his destined inheritance in its length and breadth, till in the course of his wanderings he came to Sichem, where he probably made somewhat of a prolonged stay.—¶ *Unto the place of Sichem*. That is, the spot on which Sichem was afterwards built, for it is named here by anticipation, the town not having been yet founded. The name occurs elsewhere in the form of Sechem, Sychem, and Shechem; and in the New Testament the place is called Sychar. There is not the least doubt of its identity with the present town, the name of which is variously spelt Nablous, Napolous, Napolose, and Naplosa; all from the ancient Greek *Νεαπολις Neapolis*, i. e. new town or new city. It occupies a most pleasant situation in a narrow valley in the ancient province of Samaria, between the mounts Gerizim and Ebal, which press it so closely on each side as to leave no room to add to its breadth, though it might be indefinitely extended lengthwise. It consists of two long streets, and has a population which Mr. Buckingham estimates at rather less than 10,000, mostly Mohammedans. It is upon the whole a flourishing place, considering the general misery of the country, and is indebted for some part of its prosperity to the concourse of pilgrims to visit the well of Jacob in the vicinity, where Christ discoursed with the woman of Samaria. 'There is nothing in the Holy Land finer,' says Dr. Clarke, 'than the view of Napolose from the heights around it. As the traveller descends towards it from the hills, it ap-

pears luxuriantly embosomed in the most delightful and fragrant bowers; half concealed by rich gardens and by stately trees collected into groves all around the bold and beautiful valley in which it stands.'—¶ *Unto the plain of Moreh*. If the place here designated were any where in the vicinity of Sichem, the geographical features of the country would seem to preclude the idea of its having been a 'plain;' for there is scarcely a more broken and mountainous locality in the whole region of Palestine. Accordingly the Heb. אֵילֵן מֹרֶה *ailon moreh* is diversely rendered by eminent critics 'the oak of Moreh,' or 'the terebinth (turpentine) tree of Moreh;' implying in either case, not a single tree of the kind, but a plantation or grove of them, probably called 'Moreh' after the name of the individual by whom the place was first owned or occupied; just as in ch. 13. 18, the 'plain of Mamre' is supposed to be so called from the name of a man. Whether the genuine import of the original be 'oak' or 'terebinth,' is a point which lexicographers do not enable us to decide.—¶ *The Canaanite was then in the land*. It was very pertinent to the writer's scope, in speaking of Abraham's traversing the country, to mention who were then its possessors. It is true indeed that the Canaanite was in the land also when Moses wrote the history, but the inference which some, in a spirit of cavil, would draw from this expression, viz. that the Canaanite of course was *not* in the land when Moses wrote, is by no means well-founded. Nothing was more natural than that Moses should advert to a circumstance so well calculated to try the faith of the patriarch as that of finding himself surrounded by a profane and abandoned race, hostile to his religion, and disposed to shew him no favour. Yet *this* was to be the land of his inheritance; or rather that of his posterity; and it is easy to see, that



7 <sup>n</sup> And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, <sup>n</sup> Unto thy seed will I give this land: and

m ch. 17. 1. n ch. 13. 15. & 17. 8. Ps. 105. 9, 11.

while the inquietude and annoyance arising from the presence of these wicked tribes would increase his longing for that heavenly country to which he looked forward, it was a great triumph of faith to hold fast the assurance that in despite of all opposing probabilities his seed should one day be the peaceful occupants of the territory before him.

7. *And the Lord appeared unto Abram.* Although Moses and the other sacred writers make frequent mention of these *theophanies* or divine appearances, yet as they have no where expressly described the *manner* of them, we are left on this subject very much to our own conjectures. A reference to various other passages where a similar event is described, leads to the belief that such manifestations were vouchsafed for the most part in dreams and visions of the night, when supernatural revelations were made in such a way as to carry the evidence of their divinity along with them. But until we know more of the nature of spirits and of the mode of spiritual communications, we must be content to abide in comparative ignorance on this whole matter. Certain it is that that almighty power which has reared our bodies from the dust, which has formed the eye and planted the ear, and whose inspiration hath given us understanding, can avail itself of any avenue that it pleases to reach the sentient spirits of his creatures, whether in their sleeping or waking moments, and impart the knowledge of his will. To the pious and humble mind it will be matter rather of devout admiration and praise, than of curious research, that the Father of our spirits and the God of all consolation is thus pleased to manifest his presence in

there builded he an <sup>o</sup> altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

o ch. 13. 4.

the secret chambers of the soul, and by unknown channels to infuse strength, peace, confidence, and refreshing joy into the hearts of his servants, who are disposed to make sacrifices and encounter perils for his sake. The Scriptures teem with assurance to such that they, like Abraham, shall not fail to find their reward even in the present life. The case before us is but another demonstration of the truth, that in the sorest trials God often makes the sweetest discoveries of himself.—¶ *Unto thy seed will I give this land.* The Most High unfolds his counsels and promises gradually; rewarding one degree of faith with such intimations of mercy as will beget another. He at first signified his purpose of merely *showing* to Abraham a distant land in which he was to sojourn. He now speaks of *giving* it, but not immediately to himself, but to his seed; doubtless for a farther trial of his faith. This promise is still farther amplified in a subsequent chapter, ch. 15.—¶ *And there builded he an altar, &c.* As an evidence and a pledge of the grateful and adoring sentiments to which the divine appearance had given rise. There was something in the nature or circumstances of the manifestation that exercised a *constraining power* upon his pious feelings, and prompted him, by some outward testimonial, to evince his sense of the favour conferred. The essence of religion undoubtedly has its seat in the affections; its primary influence, its throne, its conquests, are emphatically there; but its legitimate fruits will invariably shew themselves in outward acts of worship. We, as well as Abraham, may cherish a grateful inward sense of the mercies of heaven,

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, *having* Beth-el on the west, and Hai

on the east : and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and *call-*ed upon the name of the LORD.

p ch. 13. 4.

but his example should teach us the propriety of adding suitable external indications of the views which we entertain. On comparing this incident with the events related in the commencement of the previous chapter, we perceive a striking contrast between the conduct of the men of the world, and that of the Lord's servants. The former no sooner find a fruitful plain, than they embark in building a city and a tower to perpetuate their fame. The first concern of the latter is to raise an altar to God. It was thus that the new world was consecrated by Noah, and now the land of promise by Abraham. But there was still more in this act of the patriarch. The rearing an altar in the land was in fact a form of taking possession of it on the ground of a right secured to the exercise of his faith, and on the same authority the Christian, in spite of all opposing considerations from enemies without and within, assures himself of a title to the heavenly Canaan—It may be remarked, that from the circumstance of this being the first place where Abraham erected an altar after entering the promised land, it seems to have acquired subsequently a peculiar sanctity and perhaps became an *established* seat of worship, after the Israelites had conquered Canaan ; for here it is plain the sanctuary stood in the time of Joshua (See Note on Josh. 24. 1, 25, 26) ; and that it continued to be a distinguished spot for some ages afterwards, the incidents mentioned Judg. 9. 6, put beyond a question.

8. *Removed from thence unto a mountain.* Heb. *הררה*, properly *mountainwards*, towards the more mountainous district; not to any one particular

mountain. See Note on Gen. 19. 30.

—¶ *Having Beth-el on the west and Hai on the east.* Called Bethel by anticipation ; the place being first so named by Jacob on his journey from Beer-sheba to Haran, its name having been previously Luz. This prophetic mode of speaking is very common in the Scriptures, and is of the same nature with the usage we have adopted in this part of our notes of calling the patriarch whose history we are considering *Abraham* instead of *Abram*, which last was properly his name at this time. *Beth-el* literally means 'house of God.' It does not appear that any town was ever built on the precise spot to which Jacob gave this name ; but the appellation was afterwards transferred to the adjacent city of Luz, which thus became the historical Bethel. Modern researches have not been able clearly to identify the site of this ancient city, but there is a ruined village and monastery about eighteen miles, south of Naplous or Shechem, and north of Jerusalem, which is generally supposed to indicate very nearly the spot. Hai or Ai was two or three miles east of Bethel, the capture and destruction of which occupies a prominent place in the history of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, but no vestige remains of it at the present day.—Instead of 'on the west,' the Heb. *בְּרֵיתָם* *sea-ward*, from the fact that the Mediterranean sea constituted the western boundary of Canaan. So also Gen. 28. 14. Ex. 10. 19.—26. 22. Ezek. 48. 1, 2, et inf. In like manner, 'the desert' is used for the south Ps. 75. 6, 'For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south (Heb. from the desert).'  
—¶ *There he builded*

9 And Abram journeyed, <sup>a</sup> going on still toward the south.

10 ¶ And there was <sup>r</sup> a famine in the land: and Abram <sup>s</sup> went

q ch. 13. 3. r ch. 26. 1. s Ps. 105. 13.

an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord. According, it would seem, to his constant practice wheresoever he sojourned. 'Wherever he had a tent, God had an altar, and an altar sanctified by prayer.' Henry. He erected his own altar that he might not participate with idolaters in the worship offered upon theirs, and it is not improbable that his steadfast singularity in this respect drew upon him the ill will, if not the persecution, of his heathen neighbours. Men will usually brook any thing more easily than a slight cast upon their religion, and yet the worship of Abraham was a standing rebuke of theirs. It is plain from the inspired narrative that the Canaanites were a proud, fierce, and vindictive people, and it was perhaps owing to the cause now mentioned that the patriarch was obliged to make such frequent removals. But like every other good man he chose to put his life in peril rather than deny his God or forsake his service. He was now travelling as an eastern prince or emir, as a person of more than ordinary distinction, for we hear shortly after of his having 'three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born in his own house;' and he was passing through a country, the inhabitants of which were idolaters. How instructive then must have been the example thus held forth by the father of the faithful. Wherever he stopped, though it were but for a night, there he was seen, unawed by the opposition, unmoved by the ridicule, of the idolaters around him, building his temporary altar, assembling his family and his household, and together offering their sacrifices as types of the great

down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was <sup>t</sup> grievous in the land.

t ch. 43. 1.

atonement, and together worshipping the true and only Jehovah. Thus Abraham acted the part of a patriarchal missionary, and thus every part of the earth through which he passed possessed the edifying opportunity of beholding the worship of the true God in its purity, and of viewing those sacrifices which were appointed to keep up a perpetual remembrance of the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'—By his 'calling upon the name of the Lord' is meant in general his performing the various duties of sacred worship. That this embraced the offering of sacrifices, as well as the paying of thanks, is altogether probable, though not so expressly mentioned. Comp. Gen. 8. 20. But certain it is, that the whole system of the divinely prescribed worship from the time of the fall, was built upon the recognition of an atoning sacrifice to be afterwards offered, and the more distinctly the religious services of the ancient believers avowed this fact, the more acceptable they must have been in the eyes of Jehovah.

9. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south. Heb. יסע הלוך <sup>ו</sup>נסוע broke up going and breaking up, that is, advancing forwards by degrees; now removing to one point and now to another, according to the nomade custom, but on the whole moving on towards the south. The allusion is plain to the habits of those who dwell in tents, and as dwelling in tents is opposed to dwelling in houses, 1 Chron. 17. 1, 5, and implies that unsettled migratory kind of life which the apostle 1 Cor. 4. 11, calls ἀστοιμενον *unfixed*, we see with how much propriety he represents Abraham as 'sojourning in

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon :

u ver. 14. ch. 26. 7.

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife : and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

w ch. 20. 11. & 26. 7.

the land of promise, as in a strange country, *dwelling in tabernacles* (tents) with Israel and Jacob.' In the present state of society the people of God are in a great measure exempted from such a necessity and made to possess quiet and permanent abodes, but our mansions below are still sufficiently moveable to remind us that our rest is not here, but in heaven, whither, if Christians, all our removes are rapidly conducting us.

10. *And there was a famine in the land.* Another trial of his faith the patriarch is here called to encounter. A famine arises in the very land of promise and of plenty. In the fertile plains of Chaldea he had doubtless been a stranger to want, and his large establishment in Haran, makes it probable, that no difficulty of subsistence was there experienced. But now he is made to 'lack and suffer hunger,' and by being constrained to leave the land of his sojourning, undergoes the hardship of a double exile. 'He went down into Egypt,' a country lying relatively somewhat lower than Canaan, and the fertility of which, owing to the annual overflow of the Nile, seems to have entitled it, from the very earliest periods, to be considered as the *granary of the world*. But even here his faith holds him steadfast in the assurance of finally possessing the promised inheritance. He manifests no regret at having forsaken the land of his nativity nor any disposition to return thither, though now 'if he had been mindful of that country from whence he came out, he might have had opportunity to have returned.' But

instead of evincing the spirit of his unbelieving descendants in the times of Moses, and saying, 'Would God we had remained at Haran, if not in Ur; surely this is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof,' he merely goes to Egypt as a place of *temporary sojourning*, with the firm purpose of returning whenever the rigor of the famine should abate. In the midst of all our changes and buffetings in this world we should still retain our hold upon the promise of a better and an eternal inheritance.

11. *I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon.* Heb. יפה מראה *fair of aspect*. The original implies fairness of complexion, and one therefore likely to attract the attention of the darker coloured Egyptians. Though Sarah was now probably upwards of sixty, yet, considering the longevity and robust health of the patriarchs, she might still retain her personal attractions, especially as she had as yet experienced none of the effects of maternity in weakening their force.

12. *They will kill me but they will save thee alive.* Whether the apprehension here expressed was grounded upon any thing more than a knowledge of the general evil promptings of our corrupt nature, particularly in a lax state of society, is uncertain. This alone would doubtless form a sufficient warrant for his fears, and the result shews that they were well founded. Still he might have had *special reasons* for such an anticipation arising from the known character and habits of the people, of which we are ignorant. The opinion expressed by him gives the Egyptians

13 \* Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

x ch. 20. 5, 13. ch. 26. 7.

credit for being less scrupulous about murder than adultery; which shews their distorted views of right and wrong, and the fearful influence that unhallowed passions exert upon our moral judgments.

13. *Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister.* Heb. אָמַרְתְּ עַתָּה *say, now*; where the original term for 'now' has the import, not of *time*, but of *request* and *entreaty*, as rightly rendered in our version. It is often used in English in an equivalent sense. Here was obviously a failure, on the part of Abraham, in the very point in which he might have been supposed, *a priori*, most likely to have remained steadfast. She was indeed his step-sister, the daughter of his father, but not the daughter of his mother, Gen. 20. 12. This, therefore, though a truth in terms, has generally been considered as a moral untruth; because it was *intended* to convey the impression that Sarah was *nothing more* than a sister to him; and if the essence of a falsehood consists in the *purpose to deceive*, it is contended that his affirming her to be his sister was virtually denying her to be his wife, and so was tantamount to a direct falsehood. But it must be admitted that there is an important difference between uttering a lie and concealing a truth, or a part of the truth, and as Abraham himself rested the defence of his conduct on this distinction, Gen. 20. 11—13, it is right that he should have the benefit of whatever validity may belong to the plea. That modes of speech giving but a *partial* view of the truth were often blamelessly adopted by good men in the Scriptures is indubitable. Moses led Pharaoh to under-

14 ¶ And it came to pass, that when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

y ch. 39. 7. Matt. 5. 28.

stand that he wished to go with the children of Israel but three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice, Ex. 3. 18, and David certainly misled Achish as to the real motives with which he entered into his service, 1 Sam. 29. 1—7. In like manner Paul told but a *part* of the truth, Acts, 23. 6, when he cried out in the assembly, 'Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.' Yet no fault is found with him for adopting this stroke of policy. In the case of Abraham it should be considered also that he looked upon himself as the depository of a future seed in which all the families of the earth should be blessed. The preservation of his life would of course seem to him essential to the performance of the promise, and we can easily see that a peculiar solicitude in regard to it would in such circumstances be natural, and one to which his faith itself would give rise. Some allowance may doubtless be made for him on this score. Still his conduct is not to be approved, and when he adopts an expedient which went directly to rob the honour of his wife of the protection which her relation to a *husband* threw around it, we behold a faltering in the faith of a strong believer and an affecting instance of human infirmity. He would have acted far more wisely, as well as more worthily of his character, had he told the whole truth without disguise, committing the disposal of the affair entirely to the providence of God, relying on his promises, and confident of his protection. He was authorized to believe that he would *in some way* in-



15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her and commended her be-

fore Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

z ch. 20. 2.

terpose for his deliverance from the threatened peril, but failing in this, he had recourse to a carnal policy which taught him, as similar conduct always will those who practise it, that there is a 'fear of man which bringeth a snare.' The simple, straight-forward, honest course of truth, candour, and pious dependence on God is always safest and best. However strongly tempted to resort to the stratagems of fleshly wisdom to extricate ourselves from difficulty, it is better to hold fast our integrity, and taking '*Jehovah-jireh*' (the Lord will provide) for our motto, cast ourselves implicitly upon his guidance for direction.—¶ *My soul shall live because of thee.* Heb. נַפְשִׁי *naphshi*. As the original term for 'soul' is often used for the person, the phrase is evidently equivalent to, 'I shall live, or my life shall be spared, because of thee.' In like manner the soul is said to die (see note on Judg 16. 30) when a person expires.

15. *The princes also of Pharaoh saw her.* The leading men about his court; officers and dignitaries attending upon his person and occasionally despatched upon business over the provinces. 'Pharaoh' is not a proper name, but a title applied, like Cæsar among the Romans, or Czar among the modern Russians, to the kings of Egypt. Indeed if we may believe Josephus its true import is that of king. It is applied in the Scriptures to at least eight different individuals who filled the throne of Egypt. Gen. 12. 15.—28. 36. Ex. 1. 8, 19. 1 Kings, 11. 19—21.—16. 24. 2 Kings, 23. 29, 30. Jer. 44. 30.—¶ *And commended her before Pharaoh.* Shewing in this the spirit of true courtiers and sycophants, a class of men who in all ages have been notori-

ous for ministering to the unhallowed passions of their royal masters. Parasite and pander are nearly equivalent terms, and to what an extent corruption in this respect has reigned in the courts of kings from the most ancient times to the present, the day of final disclosure can alone reveal.—¶ *And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.* The intention of the Egyptian king in this step is too obvious to be mistaken; but whether it was at once carried into execution may admit of doubt. Judging solely from the purport of the narrative, we should perhaps infer that it was. But as he seems to have designed, in a formal way, to make Sarah his wife, and as eastern usage prescribed certain ceremonies and purifications preparatory to such an event, which required considerable time, it is not unlikely that it was in this interval that 'the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues;' so that she might have been restored before being fully received as an inmate of the harem. This opinion is confirmed by a comparison of the present with the incident recorded in a subsequent chapter. When a similar train of circumstances, Gen. 20. 2—18, had put her in the power of Abimelech, king of Gerar, we are expressly informed that God interposed for the protection of her person, and restored her intact to her husband. But why should a first indignity have been permitted when a second was prevented? Were not the views of Pharaoh as honorable as those of Abimelech? And was not Abraham's dissimulation deserving of as severe a punishment on his second offence as on the first? On the whole we cannot but conclude, that though Sarah seems to have remained some time in

16 And he <sup>a</sup>entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.

a ch. 20. 14.

the house of Pharaoh, yet she was kindly make the object of a watchful Providence, and that Abraham was rebuked by no other cause of grief than a temporary separation from the partner of his bosom.—The following remarks as to Eastern usage in respect to similar cases of abduction are worthy of notice. 'Of course Abraham could not have been a consenting party in this transaction; and yet it does not appear that the king intended to act, or was considered to act, oppressively in taking away a man's sister without thinking his consent necessary. The passage is illustrated by the privilege which royal personages still exercise in Persia and other countries of the East, of claiming for their harem the unmarried sister or daughter of any of their subjects. This exercise of authority is rarely, if ever, questioned or resisted, however repugnant it may be to the father or brother: he may regret, as an inevitable misfortune, that his relative ever attracted the royal notice, but since it has happened, he does not hesitate to admit the right which royalty possesses. When Abimelech, king of Gerar, acted in a similar manner towards Sarah, taking her away from her supposed brother, Gen. 20. 2, it is admitted that he did so 'in the integrity of his heart and innocency of his hands,' which allows his right to act as he did, if Sarah had been no more than Abraham's sister.' *Pictorial Bible*.

16. *Entreated Abram well for her sake.* Heb. **לְאַבְרָם הִרְטִיב** *did good to Abram.* Gr. **εὖ εχρημάτω** *used well.* Showed him many tokens of respect, conferred many favours upon him, en-

17 And the Lord <sup>b</sup>plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

b ch. 20. 19. 1 Chron. 16. 21. Ps. 105. 14. Heb. 13. 4.

riched him with gifts. These marks of his kindness are more particularly expressed in what follows, where the additions made to his possessions are severally specified. The words doubtless convey the idea of a somewhat protracted residence and a gradual accession to his property and his household establishment. But whatever acts of munificence were exhibited towards Abraham, they could not compensate him for the privation he suffered, nor prevent the interval from seeming to him long, dreary, and afflictive. The companion of his youth and of his age, of his journeyings and his perils, was torn from his arms, and how worthless in his sight must have been all the favours which were heaped upon him with a view to reconcile him to his loss, or win his consent to parting with her for ever? Shall we not suppose that in this trying period he was brought seriously and penitently to reflect upon his prevarication, and that in answer to his prayers a door was opened for the deliverance unharmed of his beloved wife?

17. *And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues.* Heb. **נִגְעִים גְּדוֹלִים** *great strokes or blows.* What these plagues were, or how Pharaoh learned that they were sent in consequence of his intended conduct in relation to Sarah, we are not informed. The Egyptians, it appears, thought highly of the sanctity of the marriage connection, for as soon as he ascertained who Sarah was, he restored her to her husband and dismissed them both with kindness. Indeed according to the standard then acknowledged his conduct

18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, 'What is this *that* thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she *was* thy wife?

19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken

c ch. 20. 9. & 26. 10.

throughout was just and honourable. We may therefore perhaps conclude that the plagues inflicted were not any severe visitations intended as a punishment, but something merely designed to touch him, as the Hebrew indicates, and thus restrain him from the wrong which he was unknowingly about to commit. But whatever else is to be inferred from it, the incident teaches us how solicitously the Lord watches over the welfare of his people, and that however poor, mean, weak, or contemptible in the eyes of the world, — they are still precious in his eyes, and that in their defence he will array himself as an enemy against kings and princes. The words of the Psalmist, Ps. 105. 12 — 14, in allusion to this very period of the sacred history, seal the truth of this remark: 'When there were but a few men in number; when they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; he suffered no man to do them wrong, yea, he reprov'd kings for their sake; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'

18. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? 'God had reprov'd Pharaoh, and now Pharaoh reproves Abraham. It is a sad thing that saints should do that, for which they should justly fall under the reproof of the wicked.' Trapp.

19. Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife. That is, so as to render her liable to be taken by me to wife. Your

her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.

20 <sup>d</sup> And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

d Prov. 21. 1

words were calculated to lead me to take her. The original *וַאֲקָחָהּ* is rendered by Onkelos and the Syriac, in the absolute form, 'and I have taken,' but upon weighing more exactly the force of the particle *ו*, and the purport of the connected future tense, in which the verb is here found, the *potential* or *contingent* sense appears the most probable. This sense is accordingly adopted by the Vulgate, and from thence has passed into most modern versions, which are very nearly unanimous in conveying the impression that Pharaoh did not actually consummate his intended nuptials with Sarah.

20. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him. Heb. *וַיִּצַו אֲנָשָׁיו* commanded men; i. e. certain men; some portion of his subjects. The ensuing clause, 'and they sent him away,' may also be rendered as it is in the Greek, 'that they should send him away,' though the former is rather more consonant with the sense indicated by the Hebrew accents. The original term (*יִשְׁלַחְהוּ* *yeshallehu*) is often used for that kind of sending or conveying away which is marked by peculiar tokens of honour and respect, as when a guest is accompanied at his departure to some distance by his host and a party of friends. The corresponding Greek term *συμπροπεμπομαι* has distinctly this sense, and so also has the Chaldee word employed by Onkelos in this passage. In the N. T. the equivalent term (*προπεμποι*) is usually rendered to bring forward on a journey, which was considered a token of

Christian hospitality and kindness, Acts, 15. 3. 3 John, 6. et al.

REMARKS.—The call of Abraham and his subsequent history in the foregoing chapter is susceptible of still farther admonition to us than we have yet deduced from it. Doubtless we must exercise a sober judgment in determining *how far* we are to follow the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, for there were many things in their conduct which were peculiar to their situation and circumstances. But we can never materially err if we attend to the *spirit* of their actions, as herein they were patterns to us, and as far as relates to this, we are to be ‘followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.’ We are bidden particularly to ‘walk in the steps of our father Abraham,’ one of the most remarkable of which is that above considered, and in respect to which we may observe,

(1.) That a similar *command* is *virtually* given to us. We are not indeed called to *leave* our country and connexions; but to withdraw our affections from earthly things and fix them upon things above, we *are* called. The world around us lies in wickedness, and we are forbidden to be of the world, any more than Christ himself was of the world. We are not to love it, or the things that are in it. We are not to be conformed to it, or to seek its friendship. We are rather to come out from it, and to be crucified to it. We are to regard it as a wilderness through which we are passing to our Father’s house, and in our passage through it to consider ourselves as strangers and pilgrims. If we meet with good accommodation and kind treatment we are to be thankful. If we meet with briars and thorns in our way, we must console ourselves with the thought that it is the *appointed* way, and that every step still brings us nearer home. Nothing good is to detain us; nothing evil to

divert us from our path. We are to be looking forward to our journey’s end, and to be proceeding towards it, whatever be the weather, or whatever the road. Thus are we to fulfil our pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan in the same spirit as did Abraham to the earthly.

(2.) Similar *inducements* also are offered to us. Abraham was to be a *blessing to himself* and a *blessing to others*. In respect to temporal things he was *blessed* in a very signal manner to the latest hour of his life. He was loaded also with spiritual and eternal benefits, being justified and accounted righteous before God, and being exalted after death to the highest seat in his Father’s house. He was also a *blessing to many*; for his children and household were governed by him in a way most conducive to their best interests. The people among whom he sojourned could not but be edified by his instructions and conduct. And to this day the whole of his life affords a stimulus to the church to serve God after his example. In like manner every one who, for Christ’s sake, will renounce the world, shall be *blessed*. He may not possess opulence and honour; but ‘the little he may possess shall be better to him than all the riches of the ungodly.’ In his soul he shall be truly blessed. View him in the state least enviable according to human apprehension; see him weeping and mourning for his sins; yet *then* is he truly blessed. He shall have pardon and acceptance with his God. He shall experience the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. He shall have joys and consolations ‘which the stranger intermeddleth not with.’ But this is not all. He shall be a *blessing* too to all around him. View him in his family connexions; view him as a husband, a parent, a master, a friend. Who so kind, so benevolent, so anxious to promote the

happiness of those connected with him? View him in the church or in the state; what blessings does he communicate by the light of his example! what evils does he avert by his prevailing intercessions! Suppose him to be instrumental to the salvation of but a single soul; the whole world is not to be weighed in the balance with the good he has done. Nor is it that individual soul only that shall acknowledge him as its benefactor; for all the good that shall accrue through the medium of that soul to the remotest posterity, shall be traced up to him as its author; and shall occasion thanksgiving to God on his behalf to all eternity. Let these inducements be duly weighed, and how light will the vanities of this world appear in comparison of them.—But

(3.) The narrative in the foregoing chapter affords another of the specimens, so often occurring in the Scriptures, of the fidelity with which the sacred writers have spoken of the faults of good men. They neither extenuate the failings nor emblazon the virtues of their heroes. While we would carefully avoid, in our construction of the writer's meaning, any unjust or gratuitous imputations, at the same time we would not slur over or soften away the really exceptionable points of their conduct. In the present case, though some commentators, have taken great pains to prove that Abraham adopted a mode of expression common in those early times, and in those Eastern countries, and one not implying equivocation, yet it is far more in accordance with the spirit of truth to acknowledge that this, like the subtilty of Jacob, and the denial of Peter, was a positive sin, unjustifiable by any sound reasoning, yet susceptible of pardon, and as the event here proved, actually pardoned, by the infinite mercy of God. He it is who alone hears the secret sigh, and watches the silent tear, and accepts the heartfelt contrition of which human

biographers must be for ever ignorant, and which yet form a large part of the communion between a deeply penitent soul and a forgiving God. The world may remember with unkindly triumph the mournful lapses of the pious, but He, 'for his own name's sake, passes by their transgressions and will not remember their sins.' It is not necessary that the *repentance* should in all cases be recorded even by the pen of inspiration; but it is necessary, in vindication of the truth of God, that the *sins* even of the holiest should not be suppressed, since they tend more fully to establish, by the conduct, even of the best of men, the doctrine of the *universal* corruption of the race, that 'there is none that doeth good, no, not *one*;' not the father of the faithful himself; that we have but one example which we cannot follow too closely or copy too minutely, even the Lord Jesus Christ, for he alone was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.'

### CHAPTER XIII.

What renders Scripture history in general, and that of the patriarch Abraham in particular, useful and instructive is, the exhibition of *private life* it affords us, and the lessons of wisdom and worth taught by it to *ordinary* men. Opportunities of performing splendid actions or displaying heroic virtue are accorded but to a few, and and that but seldom in the course of one's life. But occasions to practise generosity, justice, mercy, und moderation; to speak truth and show kindness; to melt with pity and glow with affection; to forbear and to forgive, are administered to us at every step as we move through the world, and recur perhaps more frequently than the means of gratifying the common appetites of hunger and thirst. When therefore we behold men of like passions with ourselves, placed in situations exactly sim-



## CHAPTER XIII.

AND Abram<sup>a</sup> went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and

all that he had, and Lot with him,  
<sup>a</sup> into the south.

2 <sup>b</sup> And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

a ch. 12. 9. b ch. 24. 35. Ps. 112. 3. Prov. 10. 22.

ilar to our own, practising virtues within our reach and discovering a temper and disposition which we too may easily exemplify, the narrative becomes fraught to us with a far richer amount of edification than if it brought before us actors and scenes entirely out of our level and beyond the range of our experience. These remarks apply in all their force to that portion of Abraham's history contained in the present chapter. The points of interest which we have hitherto considered in his eventful life have been chiefly those which related to his belief in, his dependence upon, and his obedience to, the God who had called him out of darkness into light. The incident we are now approaching is one that will present him to us in the details of domestic life, in the common transactions between man and man, where we shall have an opportunity of observing how far his daily conduct was in unison with that higher character with which the writers of inspiration have invested him. Happy would it be for the Christian world could its professors of all ranks and in all ages bear the scrutiny and come forth from it so unimpeachably as the father of the faithful.

1. *Into the south* Heb. *הַנִּגְבָּה* *towards the south*. That is, not towards the south of Egypt, which would have brought him to Ethiopia, but towards the southern part of Canaan, which lay northeast of Egypt. The Gr. has *εἰς τὴν ἐρημὸν* *to the desert*, which is equivalent, as Judea was bounded on the south by the desert region of Idumea. This part of the land is elsewhere distinctly called the *South* and the *South Country*, Josh. 10. 40.--11. 16.

2. *And Abram was very rich, &c.* Heb. *בְּכֶבֶד מְאֹד* *exceedingly heavy*. Gr. *πλουσιος σφόδρα* *very rich*. Chal. 'Very potent.' The original word is applied in Scripture not only to the *weight* of a burden, 1 Kings 12. 4; to the *weight* of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17; to the *weight* of a multitude of people, 2 Kings 6. 14; but also to all manner of riches. See note on Gen. 31. 1. He had gone down to Egypt poor, and now returned rich. The same was the case with his descendants, the Israelites, afterwards. This was the incipient fulfilment of the promise, ch. 12. 2, 'And I will bless thee;' for the blessing of God maketh rich. It should be remarked, however, that the epithets 'rich' or 'wealthy' are merely relative, and may have a very different import when applied to an Eastern nomade sheikh or emir, as Abraham was, from what it bears in its modern European or American application. The present standard of wealth among the heads of the Arab tribes which claim to be descended from Abraham, and still wander in or near the regions traversed by the patriarch, may aid us in forming an estimate of the property which is said to have made Abraham 'very rich.' Their wealth is for the most part the same as was his. Few indeed are rich in 'silver and gold;' but many are very rich in cattle, and in the same kinds of cattle which are assigned to Abraham in v. 16 of the preceding chapter. The number of the patriarch's cattle is not given; but in considering the number which makes an Arab rich, we may form some idea of the amount of his possessions. Buckhardt, after remarking that the property of an Arab con-

3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai;

c ch. 21. 8, 9.

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

3 ch. 12. 7, 8. e Ps. 116. 17.

sists almost wholly in horses and camels, though some tribes instead of these have extensive flocks of sheep and goats, proceeds to say, that 'no family can exist without one camel at least; a man who has but two is acknowledged poor; thirty or forty place a man in easy circumstances; and he who possesses sixty is rich.' In the richer tribes a father of a family is said to be poor with less than forty camels; and the usual stock of a family is from one to two hundred. Although some families pride themselves on having only camels, there is no tribe wholly destitute of sheep or goats. On the whole, it seems that the property of these Arab sheikhs, whose wealth is rumoured far and wide in the East, is in most cases very moderate when estimated by European standards of value—a remark useful to be remembered when riches in cattle are mentioned indefinitely in the Old Testament. Admitting however, that Abraham's wealth approximated somewhat nearly to that of Job, ch. 1. 3, the statement thus given fortunately enables us to see the amount of property which constituted wealth in the primitive times. On this the editor of the Pictorial Bible, to whom we are indebted for the principal details in this note, remarks, that the property assigned to Job in cattle is immense, and as we are accustomed to estimate such possessions in money, it would be interesting to state the value in money of the cattle there enumerated. From all the information we possess, we should say that the average value in the same country might now be between thirty and forty thousand

pounds (i. e. between \$120,000 and \$160,000). Allowing a deduction of one third of this amount for the difference between Job's property and Abraham's, it would still leave the latter a rich man, even according to our own higher estimates of wealth. The 'silver and gold' which he possessed in addition to his cattle, no doubt arose from the same source which supplies the conveniences of life to the existing nomadic tribes; namely, the sale of animals for slaughter, and of butter, cheese, and wool to the townspeople. He would naturally accumulate much property in Egypt, the inhabitants of which depended chiefly upon the pastoral people who abode in or near their country. The Egyptians themselves hated pastoral pursuits. See Note on Gen. 46. 34.

3, 4. *Went on his journeys.* Heb. יָצָא לְמַסְעָיו *went according to his removings, or breakings-up*; i. e. either proceeding slowly from place to place, pausing and availing himself of pasturage in the way; or, pursuing the same route and occupying the same stations that he had on his journey down to Egypt. It is in the latter sense that the phrase is rendered by the Septuagint and the Vulgate.—¶ *To Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, &c.* That is, before he went down to Egypt. From the manner in which 'the place of the altar' is mentioned, it would seem that this was the main attraction that drew him to the spot. With his heart set, not upon his earthly possessions, but upon his heavenly inheritance, he measured his steps to the place where he might 'com-

5 ¶ And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And <sup>f</sup>the land was not able

<sup>f</sup> ch. 36. 7.

pass God's altar,' and renew those delightful experiences which still dwelt upon his memory. It is well known with what exquisite emotions we revisit, after a long absence, the scenes with which we were familiar in childhood and youth. The sight of the well-remembered places and objects calls up a thousand interesting associations, and our past existence seems for a time to be renewed to us. But to the pious heart how much more delightful and exhilarating is the view of scenes where we have experienced striking instances of providential kindness, where we have received tokens of the divine favour, where we have held communion with God, and been refreshed with the manifestations of his love. Beth-el was undoubtedly a place thus endeared by association to Abraham, and it is only the heart that is a stranger to such feelings, that will find any difficulty in accounting for his anxiety to tread again its pleasant precincts, and breathe the air that was shed around it. To such a worldly heart how unmeaning must seem the aspirations of the Psalmist, Ps. 84. 1, 2. 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' But wisdom is justified of her children.—¶ *And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord.* That is, re-established public worship, and again acted the part of a patriarchal missionary. The words, however, may be rendered as in the Syriac, 'where Abram had called on the name of the Lord,' i. e. during his former sojourn in that place. But if he

to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

had done it before, he no doubt did it now also. The motives which prompted him then would prompt him now, to make a constant open profession of his allegiance to the one only Jehovah.

5. *And Lot also, which went with Abram.* That is, who went with him not merely on this expedition to Egypt, but who constantly attended him as a travelling companion.—¶ *Had flocks and herds and tents.* The companions and kindred of the saints are often enriched with outward blessings for their sakes. Lot, it appears, was no loser even in a temporal point of view by joining Abraham in going forth at the divine call. By 'tents' here is to be understood also the occupants of tents, as wife, children, and domestics. Thus 1 Chron. 4. 41, 'And these came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and smote their tents,' i. e. their tents and those who occupied them.

6. *And the land was not able to bear them.* Heb. לֹא נִשְׂאתָם *did not bear them.* Gr. οὐκ ἐξέποιε αὐτοὺς *did not contain or receive them.* The idea of inability conveyed by our translation, though not expressed in so many words in the original, is yet clearly implied. A similar usage obtains elsewhere. Thus 2 Chron. 1. 10, 'Who shall judge?' compared with 1 Kings, 3. 9, 'Who is able to judge?' Mat. 12. 23, 'It shall not stand,' comp. with Mark, 3. 24, 'It cannot stand.' Mat. 17. 21, 'This kind goeth not out,' comp. with Mark, 9. 29, 'Cannot go out.' The reason of the difficulty is stated in the next clause.—¶ *For their substance was great, so that, &c.* Heb. רְכוּשָׁם *re-kusham, their acquisition; from a root (רָכַשׁ rakash) signifying to get, to ac-*

7 And there was <sup>g</sup>a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: <sup>h</sup>and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

g ch. 26. 20. h ch. 12. 6.

*quire.* Their possessions in cattle had gradually accumulated to such an extent, that the pasturage was not sufficient for both. The 'could not,' however, was probably in part of a moral kind, arising from the perverse, contentious, or overreaching disposition of their respective herdsmen.

7. *And there was a strife, &c.* Originating doubtless in the increasing scarcity of herbage for the subsistence of their flocks, and in their eagerness for the possession of the wells or fountains of water, which in that rocky arid region have a value unknown to the inhabitants of a country like ours. An eager desire for increasing a domestic establishment is very natural, but the occurrence here recorded is a striking commentary on the evils incident to such a department of one's prosperity. The indiscretion, rashness, and petulance of servants often result in imbroglio heads of households in the most unhappy strifes. In the present instance, the mischiefs arising from this source were enhanced by their being witnessed by ill-disposed neighbours, who would not fail to be offended and scandalized by the quarrels of these professed followers of the only true religion. It is probably with a view to hint at this unfortunate consequence, that allusion is made to the fact of the Canaanite and the Perizzite then dwelling in the land. The writer would intimate that notwithstanding the check which the vicinity of these heathen tribes *ought* to have given to the spirit of dissension, it still broke forth. So in all ages enemies of the church

8 And Abram said unto Lot, <sup>i</sup>Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren.

i 1 Cor. 6. 7

are ever on the watch to discover, publish, and triumph over the feuds and jealousies that may arise between its members. This consideration alone should quench the unholy flame of divisions among brethren.

8. *Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen.* That is, between me and thee, *even* between my herdmen and thy herdmen. Though there was doubtless the most entire harmony between Abraham and Lot personally, yet the language of the patriarch, according to Scripture usage, identifies the principals themselves with their respective companies. Abraham sagaciously foresaw that these jarring discords between his people and those of Lot would increase more and more in proportion to the enlargement of their possessions, and that at last some unpleasant misunderstanding might take place between him and his nephew. Acting therefore on the truth of the wise man's saying, that 'the beginning of strife is as the letting out of water,' he would, by a timely precaution, arrest the evil in the outset, and preserve the existing peace *between themselves* by suppressing the quarrel between their adherents.—¶ *For we be brethren.* Heb. אֲנָשִׁים אֶחָדִים *men brethren*. The Hebrews called all kinsmen 'brethren,' but the term here was applicable in a still stricter sense, for Abraham was uncle to Lot, and also his brother-in-law, having married Lot's sister. But there was a yet higher sense in which they were 'brethren,' viz. in their religion. They professed

9 \* *Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt*

k ch. 20. 15. & 34. 10. 1 Rom. 12. 18. Heb. 12. 14. Jam. 3. 17.

the same faith and the same mode of worship; and as disciples of a religion breathing love and peace, good will and good offices, it could not but be attended with the worst consequences were they now to fall out with each other, and present the sad spectacle of a divided brotherhood. Indeed, if one of the laws of our adoption into the family of God is, that we become in all things brethren to each other, and bound to study each other's interest, how little does that sacred relation effect, if it does not avail to extinguish our mutual animosities? When we look around us in the world, who would believe that the same relationship, and therefore the same powerful motive for peace, still exists among its inhabitants? When we see the quarrels and the coldnesses, the lawsuits and the strifes, between those who are not only bound by the common tie of Christian fraternity, but by the closest bonds of affinity and blood, are we not tempted to inquire, can these men be indeed 'brethren'? Can they all be trusting to the same hope of salvation, and expecting, or even desiring to dwell together in the same heaven? Indeed, is it possible to conceive that with such divisions of heart, with such bitterness of feeling, the same eternal mansions could contain them? Would not the tranquillity of heaven be disturbed if they were admitted there? Would heaven be heaven, if it were a place where so many differing brethren, under the influence of alienated affections, were to be congregated for ever together?

9. *Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, &c.* It would be difficult to point out a finer exemplification of the truly noble, disinterested,

*take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

and generous spirit which reigns in the bosom where the love of God has taken up its abode. It was on this trying occasion that the practical nature of Abraham's religion most strikingly developed itself; and that we may place this in its strongest light, let us for a moment consider the manner in which a man of the world would have acted upon such an emergency, and then mark the instructive contrast. Would not he have argued thus?—'There can be no question that if the land will not maintain our whole company, it will at least maintain me and all that belong to me. Let not my nephew therefore seek to appropriate to himself what has been in so peculiar a manner promised to me. I have both the right to claim the country, and the power to enforce that right, and though I would not do any thing that is not equitable and kind, it cannot be expected that the elder should yield to the younger, or that I should undervalue the promises or the gifts of God, by being so unnecessarily ready to transfer them to another. If strife or hostility be awakened, the peril be to him who awakens it; I have wherewithal to defend myself and to punish my opponents.' Such would have been unquestionably the opinion of nine tenths of mankind, and so prevalent is this selfish mode of reasoning and acting, that we scarcely feel that there would have been any thing objectionable, had this been the language and conduct of the patriarch himself. But how different was the fact! Abraham's conduct throughout was worthy of his exalted character. It was (1) *eminently condescending*. As the elder of the two, as standing in the superior relation of



10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all <sup>m</sup> the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD <sup>n</sup>

m ch. 19. 17. Deut. 34. 3. Ps. 107. 34. n ch. 19. 24, 25.

destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, <sup>a</sup> *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto <sup>p</sup> Zoar.

o ch. 2. 10. Isai. 51. 3. p. ch. 14. 2, 8. & 19. 22.

an uncle, as being the person peculiarly called of God, while Lot was only a nephew and an attendant, he might have claimed the deference and submission due to him, and insisted on the right of a first choice. But instead of arrogating to himself any authority or standing upon his prerogative, he was ready to waive his rights and act the part of an inferior, so that peace might be preserved between them. In so doing he evinced the spirit of genuine piety, which teaches that condescension is the truest honour, and that to be the servant of all is to imitate most nearly the character of our blessed Lord. From him accordingly the proposal came, that since circumstances imperiously required a separation, they should separate in a manner that became their holy profession. How many angry disputes, and bitter quarrels, and bloody wars, might have been prevented, if the contending parties, instead of proudly requiring the first advances from each other, would strive who should be foremost in making proposals of peace! (2.) It was *generous*. Common justice required that the partition of land should be such as to secure to Abraham equal advantages with Lot. But disregarding this he cheerfully conceded to his nephew whatever portion he saw fit to take. Though he too had numerous flocks and herds to be subsisted as well as Lot, and though he could not but know that there was great difference in the quality of the lands on either side of him, the one being far more fertile and better watered than the other, yet he desired Lot to occupy whichever he preferred, and to leave the other to him. What a noble and magnanimous

spirit displayed itself in this proffer! Would to God that such an indifference to carnal interests were more prevalent in the world, and especially among professors of religion! This would show a becoming deadness to the world. It would give evidence that our hearts were set on things above and not on things below. It would illustrate more strongly than ten thousand words, the efficacy of faith, and the excellence of true religion. Yet alas! how little of this spirit is there upon earth! To give up a single point, to yield upon a single question, although you know yourself to be in the wrong, is, in the opinion of the world, rather a mark of pusillanimity and weakness, than of common honesty and candour; while even among sincere Christians such a concession is considered as no slight triumph of principle. But to yield when you are confessedly in the right, to give up your claim when justice, reason, equity, and the power to maintain it are all on your side, this is so rare as to be rather matter of tradition than such things have been, than among the every-day occurrences of the Christian's life, that such things are. Yet how completely was this the principle upon which Abraham acted, and which the God of Abraham commands.

10. *And Lot lifted up his eyes, &c.* However admirable was the conduct of Abraham, we observe a striking contrast to it in that of Lot. His conduct was censurable (1.) as it argued an inordinate degree of selfishness and of concern about his temporal interests. Having now an opportunity afforded him of gratifying his covetous desires, he seems greedily to have em-

braced it. Had not selfishness deadened the finer feelings of his nature, he would have returned the compliment and given to Abraham the first choice. Or, if he had accepted his offer, he would at least have endeavoured to make an equitable division of the lands, so that each might have a fair portion of the more fertile country. But instead of this, he casts a wishful eye over the well-watered plains of the Jordan, and in the spirit of a grasping worldling leaves nothing unappropriated. If he escapes the charge of adding field to field, it is by seizing the whole at once. Nothing less than *all* will satisfy his inordinate *lust of land*. How palpable the sordid selfishness of such a conduct! How clear the evidence that worldly considerations had obtained the ascendancy, and were the governing principles of his heart. His conduct, (2.) was culpable because it argued too little regard to the interests of his soul. He can hardly be supposed to have been ignorant of the character of the people of Sodom, for they declared their sin in the most open and unblushing manner, as if in defiance of heaven and earth; nor could he but have been aware of the tendency of evil communications to corrupt good manners. But as he seems to have left Abraham without regret, so it would appear that he approached Sodom without fear. What benefits he was likely to lose, what dangers to incur, by the step, seem not to have entered his mind. His earthly prosperity was all that engaged his thoughts; and whether the welfare of his soul was promoted or impeded, he did not care. This conduct no one hesitates to condemn, yet how many are there that practically pursue the same heedless and perilous course in their great movements in life? With the single view of bettering their worldly condition, they often turn their backs upon the means of grace, and reckless of consequences plant them-

selves and their families in places where sabbaths and sanctuaries are unknown, and where they are constantly exposed to the most pernicious influences. Alas, at how dear a price are such worldly advantages purchased! Well will it be for them, if their goodly plains and fields do not finally yield such a harvest of sorrow as was gathered by hapless Lot.—¶ *Beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where.* Heb. *כִּלְהָ מִשְׁקָה* *that it was all a watering*; i. e. abundantly watered, or a region that shewed the fertilizing effects which the irrigation of the Jordan would naturally produce. 'This river, being the principal stream of Palestine, has acquired a distinction much greater than its geographical importance could have given. It is sometimes called 'the river' by way of eminence, being in fact almost the only stream of the country which continues to flow in summer. The river rises about an hour and a quarter's journey (say three or three miles and a quarter) northeast from Banias, the ancient Cæsarea Philippi, in a plain near a hill called Tel-el-kadi. Here there are two springs near each other, one smaller than the other, whose waters very soon unite, forming a rapid river, from twelve to fifteen yards across, which rushes over a stony bed into the lower plain, where it is joined by a river which rises to the northeast of Banias. A few miles below their junction the now considerable river enters the small lake of Houle, or Semechonitis, (called 'the waters of Merom' in the Old Testament). This lake receives several other mountain-streams, some of which seem to have as good claim to be regarded as forming the Jordan as that to which it is given in the previous statement; and it would perhaps be safest to consider the lake formed by their union as the real source of the Jordan. After leaving the lake, the river proceeds about twelve miles to the larger lake,

called by various names, but best known as the Sea of Galilee; after leaving which, it flows about seventy miles farther, until it is finally lost in the Dead or Salt sea. It discharges into that sea a turbid, deep, and rapid stream, the breadth of which is from two to three hundred feet. The whole course of the river is about one hundred miles in a straight line, from north to south; but, with its windings, it probably does not describe a course of less than one hundred and fifty miles. Burckhardt says that it now bears different names in the various divisions of its course: *Dhan* near its source; *Ordan* lower down, near the Sea of Galilee; and *Sherya* between that lake and the Dead sea. As now understood, the valley or 'plain of Jordan,' through which the river flows, is applied to that part between the lake of Houle and the Dead sea; but as understood in the text, it must have comprehended that part of the valley which the Dead sea now occupies. From the accounts of different travellers, it seems to vary in breadth from four to ten or twelve miles in different parts. It is now in most parts a parched desert, but with many spots covered with a luxuriant growth of wild herbage and grass. Its level is lower, and the temperature consequently higher, than in most other parts of Syria. The heat is concentrated by the rocky mountains on each side, which also prevent the air from being cooled by the westerly winds in summer. This valley is divided into two distinct levels: the upper, or general level of the plain; and the lower, which is about forty feet below it. The preceding statement refers to the former; the latter varies in breadth from a mile to a furlong, and is partially covered with trees and luxuriant verdure, which give it an appearance striking in contrast with the sandy slopes of the higher level. The river flows through the middle of this lower val-

ley, in a bed the banks of which are fourteen or fifteen feet high when the river is at the lowest. The banks are thickly beset by tamarisks, willow, oleander, and other shrubs, which conceal the stream from view until it is approached very nearly. These thickets, with those of the lower plain, once afforded cover to lions and other beasts of prey, which, when driven from their shelter by the periodical overflow of the river, gave much alarm to the inhabitants of the valley, Jeremiah 49. 19. Besides this passage, there are others, Josh. 3. 15; 1 Chron. 12. 15, in which an overflow of the Jordan is mentioned, occasioned doubtless by the periodical rains or the melting of the snows on Lebanon. The river seems then to have overflowed its inner banks to a considerable extent about the commencement of spring. Modern travellers who have visited it at that season, have not noticed such an inundation: whence we may infer that the stream of the Jordan has diminished, or that it has worn itself a deeper channel. It has much perplexed inquirers to determine what became of the waters of the Jordan previously to the formation of the Dead Sea. This difficulty seems to have been resolved by Burckhardt, who, in his 'Travels in Syria and the Holy Land,' considers that the valley or plain of the Jordan is continued, under the names of *El Ghor* and *El Araba*, to the Gulf of Akaba; demonstrating that the river discharged its waters into the eastern gulf of the Red sea, until its course was interrupted by the great event which the nineteenth chapter of Genesis records.' *Pict. Bible.*—¶ *Like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.* As Zoar was not in Egypt, but at the southern extremity of the plain of Jordan, the latter clause is to be connected with the first part of the verse, and the clause, 'before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah,' to be

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot <sup>a</sup> dwelled in

q ch. 19. 29.

read in ■ parenthesis. Or we may adopt the equivalent construction of Houbigant who translates the verse;—‘Before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, it was all, as thou goest to Zoar, well watered, even as the garden of the Lord, and as the land of Egypt.’ This gives the correct idea. Zoar is here so called by anticipation, as its name at this time was Bela, ch. 14. 2, 8, and 19. 22.

11. *Separated themselves the one from the other.* Heb. אִישׁ מִמֶּלְ אָחִיו *a man from his brother*; a common Hebrew idiom for expressing the idea conveyed in our translation. As nature, affection, religion, affliction all conspired to unite them, no doubt the prospect of separation was a severe trial to the feelings of Abraham. But it was a friendly parting; and whatever blank was made by it in his happiness, it was speedily and abundantly compensated by renewed manifestations of favour from that Almighty Friend ‘who sticketh closer than a brother.’

12. *Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan.* In its widest sense the land of Canaan included also the plain of Jordan, where Lot chose his residence; but it seems to have been occasionally used, in a more limited sense, to designate the mountainous country lying between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, exclusive of the valley through which that river runs.—¶ *Pitched his tent toward Sodom.* That is, continued to remove his tent from place to place, gradually approaching towards Sodom, though not perhaps with the design of actually entering and taking up his

the cities of the plain, and <sup>a</sup> pitched his tent toward Sodom.

13 But the men of Sodom <sup>a</sup> were wicked and <sup>t</sup> sinners before the Lord, exceedingly.

r ch. 14. 12. & 19. 1. 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. s ch. 18. 20. Ezek. 16. 49. 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. t ch. 6. 11.

abode in it. From this he would doubtless be deterred by the well known abandoned and profligate character of its inhabitants. We may suppose that he fully intended to keep at a safe distance from that scene of abominations, but having once come within the perilous vicinity of the tents of sin, he is imperceptibly drawn onward. So treacherous is fallen nature in its weakness, that having once been persuaded to tread the borders of forbidden ground, we are easily induced to proceed a little farther, to take one more step, till at length every restraint is broken through and we are borne forward into the vortex of sin. So with Lot. The next that we hear of him he has actually planted himself in Sodom. Righteous Lot, a servant of God, seated in the very sink of corruption! ‘Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.’

13. *Wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.* Heb. רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה *wicked and sinners to Jehovah exceedingly.* Chal. ‘Unrighteous with their mammon, and most vile in their bodies before the Lord exceedingly.’ A very emphatic mode of expression, implying not only the depraved character common to all mankind in their unrenewed state, but the most vile, unblushing, abominable, and awful exhibitions of that character. ‘They were not only wicked, but desperately wicked; they were not only sinners, but high-handed and heaven-daring sinners. Their city was polluted to its centre, and the iniquities which abounded in it were even now calling aloud for the vengeance of heaven. It had filled up

14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot <sup>u</sup> was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, <sup>w</sup> northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward :

15 For all the land which thou

u ver. 11. w ch. 28. 14.

the measure of its crimes and was already ripe for destruction. How Lot was affected by the manners of the abandoned society in which he finally took up his abode, we learn from the words of the apostle, 2 Pet. 2. 8, 'For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds'—a passage on which Bp. Hall shrewdly remarks, 'He vexed his own soul, for who bade him stay there?'

14. *And the Lord said unto Abram, &c.* Leaving Lot for the present, not to enjoy, but to endure as best he may, the society of the wretched Sodomites, our attention is again turned to the venerable patriarch, who was not so easily ensnared by the sight of his eyes. We have already noticed his generous proposal to Lot. We have seen him willing for the sake of preserving peace, to waive his right and forego his temporal advantage. Here we are taught how richly his disinterestedness was rewarded; and in his example we cannot fail to read the certainty, that a similar self-sacrificing conduct will always redound to the ultimate gain of him who practises it. Upon his withdrawal from Lot, the Lord again meets him in mercy and renews to him his gracious covenant promise. He bids him lift up his eyes and look around the whole horizon, surveying the land on the north and the south, on the east

see<sup>t</sup>, <sup>x</sup> to thee will I give it, and <sup>y</sup> to thy seed for ever.

16 And <sup>z</sup> I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth : so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered.

x ch. 12. 7. & 15. 18. & 17. 8. & 24. 7. & 26. 4. Num. 34. 12. Deut. 34. 4. Acts 7. 5. y 2 Chron. 20. 7. Ps. 37. 22, 29. & 112. 2. z ch. 15. 5. & 22. 17. & 26. 4. & 28. 14. & 32. 12. Ex. 32. 13. Num. 23. 10. Deut. 1. 10. 1 Kings 4. 20. 1 Chron. 27. 23. Is. 48. 19. Jer. 33. 22. Rom. 4. 16, 17, 18. Heb. 11. 12.

and the west, and then confirms to him and his posterity the gift of the whole as far as the eye could reach. How striking an instance this of the considerate kindness, of the recompensing mercy, of Him with whom we have to do! At the moment when Abraham had been making the greatest sacrifices for peace, and demonstrating how loosely he sat by the richest earthly abundance, compared with the desire of securing the divine favour, the Most High visits him with a fresh manifestation of his favour, and comforts him with renewed assurances of his future inheritance. 'Thus he who sought this world lost it; and he who was willing to give up any thing for the honour of God and religion, found it.' Fuller.

15. *To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.* By comparing Acts, 7. 5, it would appear that this promise was not fulfilled to Abraham *personally*; a more correct rendering, therefore, may be, 'To thee will I give it, *even* to thy seed.' By the Heb. and Gr. usage in the Scriptures, the particle 'and' is very often, synonymous with 'even,' and should be so rendered. As for example, 1 Chron. 21. 12, 'The Lord's sword, *and* the pestilence;' i. e. *even* the pestilence. Num. 31. 6, 'The holy instruments, *and* the trumpets;' i. e. *even* the trumpets. Eph. 4. 11, 'And some pastors and teachers;' i. e. *even* teachers. Mat. 21. 5, 'Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an



17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

18 Then Abram removed his

ass and a colt the foal of an ass; i. e. *even* a colt, &c. Thus probably, Rev. 19. 19, 'And I saw the beast, *and* the kings of the earth;' i. e. *even* the kings of the earth; intimating that the symbolical 'beast' is but another name for the aggregate body of despotic rulers, within the limits of the apocalyptic 'earth.'—¶ *For ever.* Heb עַד עוֹלָם *unto eternity*; a period of very long, but indefinite duration. Subsequent facts in the history of the chosen people show that this promise was to be understood conditionally, as they might by transgression forfeit the possession of this covenanted region, as was actually the case, Lev. 26. 33. Is. 63. 18. If, however, the Jews are to be hereafter restored to the land of their fathers, as many interpret the prophecies respecting them, these words will receive a still more exact accomplishment than they have hitherto done. Even now, it is common to speak of the Jews obtaining possession of *their own* land, as though their title had never been extinguished. See Note on ch. 17. 18.

17. *Arise, walk through the land, &c.* Heb. הִתְהַלֵּךְ *make thyself to walk, traverse the land to and fro.* The form of the original conveys the idea of what Ewald terms 'zealous spontaneity,' and has an emphasis which cannot well be transferred into English. It was a command or permission to Abraham, not as a lonely individual, but with all his establishment to travel over and sojourn in any portion of the country that he pleased, and that too as a pledge of its finally becoming the perpetual inheritance of his seed.

18. *Then Abram removed his tent.* Heb. וַיִּצְחֹל *and pitched tent.* The

word in the original is not the same with that usually rendered *remove* (נָסַע) in reference to tents, but the same as that used v. 12, of Lot's fixing his habitation towards Sodom, and probably kindred to the term occurring Is. 13. 20, 'Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent (יָהֵל יָהֵל) there.' It is a general expression, implying that Abraham, still following his nomadic mode of life, and in virtue of the permission above mentioned, selected a station, now here and now there, where he spread his tent and abode for a time, and so continued journeying at intervals, till at length he came and pitched his tent more permanently in the plain of Mamre.—¶ *And came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre.* It is probable that a somewhat extended period of time, perhaps the lapse of one or two or more years, is embraced in the first two clauses of this verse. It seems to be implied that after making the circuit of the country, agreeably to the divine monition above mentioned, he finally selected a location in the neighbourhood of Hebron, which is not more than eighteen hours' journey from the site of Beth-el, his former station. The remark made in the note on ch. 12. 6, on the original of the word *plain* (אֲלֹן) is applicable here also, as the Hebrew term is the same. It undoubtedly denotes a *trec*, or *grove*, or *plantation of trees* of some kind, but whether of oaks or terebinths cannot be determined. Mamre is the name of the person described ch. 14. 13, as an Amorite, one of three brothers who were friends of Abraham and confederates with him in the expedition against the four kings, and the plain was prob-

a ch. 14. 13. b ch. 35. 27. & 37. 14.

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ably so called from him as its first owner or occupant — ¶ *Which is in Hebron.* That is, by or near Hebron; in the region in which Hebron is situated. This place did not obtain the name of Hebron till it came into the possession of Caleb, several years after the death of Moses. Josh. 15. 14. Its former name was Kirjath-arba. It is to be presumed, therefore, that the name in the present passage was inserted by Ezra or some other person who revised the sacred canon in after ages. For an account of Hebron, see Note on Gen. 23. 2. — ¶ *And built there an altar unto the Lord.* See Note on Gen. 12. 7.

REMARKS.—(1.) We learn from the incidents here recorded the disadvantages, if not the dangers, of wealth. Wealth is almost universally considered as a source of happiness, and in that view is most eagerly sought. That it may conduce to our happiness in some respects, especially when improved for the relief of our fellow-creatures, we admit; but it is much oftener a source of trouble and vexation than of satisfaction and comfort. 'If goods increase,' says Solomon, 'they are increased that eat them.' A multitude of servants augments our care. Their disagreements among themselves, or disputes with the servants of others, frequently become an occasion of disquiet to ourselves. The envy also and jealousy that are excited in the breasts of others, operate yet farther to the disturbance of our own peace. In how many families have contentions arisen from this source! How many who have spent years together in love and harmony, have been distracted by feuds and animosities as soon as ever a large estate came to be divided between them! Even piety itself cannot always prevent the discord that arises from this source. Abraham and Lot had lived together in perfect amity, while their circumstances were such as to preclude any

jarring of interests; but when their opulence increased, occasions of jealousy arose; their servants quarrelled, and the masters could no longer remain together. 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.' Through covetousness thousands 'have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.'

(2.) The children of Abraham should cultivate peace, especially by cutting off the occasions of strife. 'The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water;' the breach however small at first, being quickly widened by the stream that rushes through it, will speedily defy all the efforts of man to prevent an inundation. Let us therefore learn the important lesson to leave off contention before it be meddled with.' When it is once begun, no man can tell *when* or *how* it shall terminate.

(3.) External advantages of place or situation are no sure criterion of the favour of God. The sinners of Sodom dwelt in a fertile and delightful region; Abraham and his family among the mountains. But this paradise was turned into the likeness of hell by the sinners that dwelt there. How much happier was Abraham and his pious household in the mountains!

(4.) Let us often turn our thoughts to the promised blessings of Heaven in order to strengthen our faith and hope. Let us dwell much upon the prospect of our glorious inheritance. Let us survey the heavenly Canaan 'in the length of it, and the breadth of it.' Such a believing anticipation will cheer and refresh us when those whom we have loved and cherished here, and in whose society we have delighted, are separated from us by distance or death. In the darkest hour of this world's vicissitudes, let us listen to the soothing voice of the Spirit saying to us as he did of old to Abraham, 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place

## CHAPTER XIV.

AND it came to pass, in the days of Amraphel king <sup>a</sup>of

a ch. 10. 10. & 11. 2.

where thou art;' cease to dwell upon your present privations, disquietudes, and losses; sorrow not as men without hope; 'look from the place' where sin has tainted every comfort and blighted every prospect, and let the eye of faith cast its glances of hope and joy to the inheritance prepared for us. 'For all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it.'

## CHAPTER XIV.

The next important incident detailed in the life of Abraham, differs remarkably from all that have preceded it. The patriarch was pre-eminently a man of peace, who, as we have seen, was willing to sacrifice every worldly advantage rather than interrupt that harmony which he knew to be so essential to the honour of his religious profession, and so entirely in accordance with the will of God. On the present occasion, however, we find him assuming the character of the warrior, placing himself at the head of a numerous body of his servants, and waging a short but successful conflict with the confederate princes who had invaded Canaan from the East. Much as the pious heart must dislike the very name of war, and utterly unchristian and unjustifiable as it will consider every species of *offensive* warfare, yet we cannot withhold our approbation from this truly heroic and disinterested action of the patriarch. To succour the weak, to relieve the distressed, to liberate the captive, were his only motives, and the comfort of an approving conscience his only reward; for we find that after having been favoured with the most signal success instead of turning the fruits of his victory to his own advantage, all the use

Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of <sup>b</sup>Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

b Is. 11. 11.

he made of it was to restore whatever had been taken to its rightful owners.

1. *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar.* Gr. *ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ* in the reign or reigning-time. From the extreme antiquity of the event here recorded, and the little light which is elsewhere thrown, either by sacred or profane history, upon the persons and places designated, great obscurity necessarily attaches to several parts of the narrative. It is clear that Chedorlaomer was the chief personage concerned in this expedition, but whether he or Amraphel was at this time the supreme potentate of the East, or in other words, whether Persia (Elam) or Assyria (Shinar) had the ascendancy, is very difficult to be determined. As it is a matter of mere historical interest, but slightly affecting the practical lessons which we are more anxious to deduce from the record, we shall glance but briefly at this view of the subject.—As the countries about the Euphrates and Tigris were that part of the world where the sons of Noah began to settle after leaving the ark, it was there that population and power would first naturally accumulate, and lead to the establishment of despotic governments. The families and tribes emigrating from these regions would be considered in the light of colonies, which ought to be subject to the parent state. Such it appears probable were the ideas of the four Eastern kings here mentioned, and we may suppose that it was with a view of enforcing this subjection, which after having been twelve years acknowledged, was at length thrown off, that the present invasion was planned. In what relation the four kings had previously stood

2 That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab

king of <sup>c</sup>Admah, and Shemeber king of Zebolim, and the king of Bela, which is <sup>d</sup>Zoar.

c Deut. 29. 23. d ch. 19. 22.

to each other, is uncertain; but they now combined as allies, and marched with their forces, which we have no reason to think were very large, to the land of Canaan. Indeed, it is very important to bear in mind that the term 'king,' in this and other early applications, is far from carrying with it the import which our modern ideas of royalty are apt to connect with the title. The kings of those primitive times were mere petty chieftains, answering to the Arab sheikhs of latter days, ruling over a single town and the surrounding district, or acting as the heads of tribes more or less numerous, and totally unlike the potent sovereigns of modern times. This will be evident from the fact that each of the little cities of the plain, which lay within a few miles of each other, is said to have had its distinct king, all of whom united on this occasion in opposing their common invaders.—The whole narrative is to be considered as entirely subordinate to the history of Abraham, and introduced here mainly for the purpose of illustrating a new and interesting feature of his character, and of displaying new aspects of that kind Providence which watches with such constant vigilance over the welfare of his servants.—¶

*Tidal king of nations.* Heb. מלך גוים. The Heb. גוים *goyim* is usually rendered *Gentiles*, and though the majority of commentators are of opinion that Tidal's dominions lay in Upper Galilee, which was in aftertimes called 'Galilee of the Gentiles,' (or Galilee of the nations), Is. 9. 1. Mat. 4. 15, yet we think it more probable that the title denotes the head of a mixed multitude of people, who had flocked together to his standard from different regions and

different tribes, and put themselves under the conduct of one who would gratify their love of adventure or hope of spoil.

2. That these *made war*, &c. This is the first war expressly recorded in the annals of the human race, and it is evident that it sprung from the same causes that have given rise to the thousands of wars, which, from that day to this, have wasted the family of man and drenched the earth in blood—vain-glorious pride and grasping ambition. Nor can we hope for a cessation of the barbarous practice till the general prevalence of Christianity, in the power of of its peaceful spirit, shall have extinguished the flames of these unhallowed passions, and taught men to regard each other as brethren, who *cannot*, if they conceived aright of their mutual interests, have any conflicting objects that should drive them to deeds of violence. 'This earliest account of an act of warfare is very remarkable, and its difficulties will be best elucidated by a reference to existing practices among the Arab tribes. It is indeed by no means unlikely, that although we have supposed the invading kings such monarchs as the kings of the plain are ascertained to have been, they were in fact nomade chiefs or sheikhs, inhabiting the country between Canaan and the Euphrates, and some of them perhaps beyond that river. The expedition has the whole appearance of an Arab incursion. Their apparently rapid sweep, like a whirlwind, over the countries indicated—their return with captives and spoil—and the ultimate night-surprise and easy overthrow by Abraham and his friends—are all circumstances strikingly analogous to

3 All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, <sup>e</sup> which is the salt sea.

4 Twelve years <sup>f</sup> they served Chedorlaomer, and <sup>g</sup> in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

<sup>e</sup> Deut. 3. 17. Num. 34. 12. Josh. 3. 16. Ps. 107. 34. <sup>f</sup> ch. 9. 26.

Arab usages on both sides. That their force was not numerous is evident from the circumstance that the petty kings of the plain ventured to give them battle on their return flushed with success, and from the small body by which they were defeated. There are few sheikhs of the present time who can bring more than 300 horsemen into action; and if we suppose each of the four 'kings' brought such a number of men, lightly armed, and unencumbered with baggage, we have probably the highest estimate that can be allowed in the present instance. They were probably mounted on camels, and few things are more common in our own day than to hear of Arabs or Turcomans, in even much smaller numbers, traversing extensive deserts, scouring the country beyond, sacking villages, menacing and entering large towns in the night, all with astonishing rapidity, and return laden with captives and spoil. The affair has the appearance altogether of a Turcoman *chapporo* on a large scale.' *Pict. Bible*. The five cities here mentioned stood near together on the plain of Jordan, constituting what is frequently termed the *Pentapolis*, or *five fold city*, and, except Zoar, were all afterwards destroyed by fire from heaven. Sodom and Gomorrah are always so mentioned as to appear the principal of the five, and Bela was probably the least important. Had they heard the voice of the first rod, and humbled themselves in repentance, they might have escaped the stroke of the second; but as it was, as

5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote <sup>h</sup> the Rephaims <sup>i</sup> in Ashteroth Karnaim, and <sup>j</sup> the Zuzims in Ham, <sup>k</sup> and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

<sup>g</sup> ch. 15. 20. Deut. 3. 11. <sup>h</sup> Josh. 12. 4. & 13. 12. <sup>i</sup> Deut. 2. 20. <sup>k</sup> Deut. 2. 10. 11.

often happens, a lesser judgment was made the precursor of a greater.

3. *All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim.* That is, these last named kings, ruling the cities of the plain, having entered into a league or confederacy, for the defence of their territory, assembled their forces in the place mentioned. The original phrase for 'joining battle' v. 8, is different. It would seem from this text that the part of the valley of Jordan occupied by these cities and their territories, and which now forms the bed of the Dead Sea, was then called 'The vale of Siddim.' For observations on the overthrow of these cities and on the Dead Sea, see Notes on ch. 19. 24, 25.

4. *Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer.* It would seem, therefore, on the whole, that the ascendancy of the kingdom of Babylon, founded by the sons of Ham under Nimrod, had at this time ceased or declined, and that Persia, settled by the descendants of Shem, had become the dominant nation of the Eastern world. In this fact we see the incipient accomplishment of the prediction, that Canaan should be the servant of Shem.—¶ *In the thirteenth year they rebelled.* That is, refused to pay tribute, the usual sign of subjection. Thus it is said of Hezekiah, 2 Kings, 18. 7, 'And he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not,' i. e. withheld the tribute which had formerly been exacted of the kings of Judah.

5. *Smote the Rephaims—Zuzims—Emims.* These would seem to have



6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness.

7 And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.

8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the

1 Deut. 2. 12, 22. m 2 Chron. 20. 2.

king of Bela, (the same is Zoar); and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;

9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of El-lasar; four kings with five.

10 And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there: and they that remained fled to the mountain.

n ch. 11. 3. o ch. 19. 17, 30.

been people of extraordinary stature inhabiting the country east of the Jordan and Dead sea. The country of the Rephaims is identified with that of Bashan, the last king of which, Og, so famous for his stature, was dispossessed by the Israelites, when the city of Ashteroth was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, whose allotment was east of Jordan. The Zuzims and Emims had been previously dispossessed of their territory by the children of Moab and Ammon, the sons of Lot. The invading chiefs appear to have overrun the eastern bank of the Jordan, from near its source, to the desert south of Canaan, through which they proceeded westward toward the Mediterranean; and, after having made a near approach to that sea, returned, and on their re-ascent through the vale of the Jordan, gave battle to the kings of the plain. This account of their track will be readily understood by reference to any map in which the situations of the early nations of this region are given.—¶ *Slaveh Kiria-thaim*. Or, 'the plains or flats of Kiria-thaim.'

6. *And the Horites in their mount Seir*. The name imports *dwellers in caves, Troglodites*. For an account of mount Seir and the land of Edom, see note on ch. 36. 9.

7. *And they returned, and came to En-mishpat*. That is, turned about, after smiting the people above mentioned, and taking a northerly direction entered the valley of the Jordan, and attacked the inhabitants of the plain. En-mishpat, i. e. fountain of judgment, is so called by anticipation. This name was conferred in consequence of the circumstance recorded Num. 20. 10, where God gave judgment or sentence against Moses and Aaron for their offence thus committed.

—¶ *All the country of the Amalekites*. Heb. *כל שדה העמלקי* *all the field of the Amalekite*. This also by anticipation; as Amalek was not yet born. Gen. 36. 10, 11. Understand it of the country afterwards occupied by the Amalekites. The sacred writer speaks of places by the names most familiar in his own times.

10. *And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits*. Heb. *בארת בארת חמר* *was pits, pits, of slime*; an idiom common to the Hebrew when it would convey the idea of a great number. So 'heaps, heaps,' Ex. 8. 14. 'Ranks, ranks (Gr.),' Mark, 5. 40. It denotes either places where asphaltum or bitumen oozed out of the ground, obstructing the flight of the discomfited host; or places which had been excavated in digging bitumen to be employ-

11 And they took <sup>p</sup>all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

<sup>p</sup> ver. 16, 21.

ed perhaps in the construction of their houses; a material which, from being strongly impregnated with sulphureous matter, would render their city a more easy prey to the devouring element. See note on ch. 19. 24, 25.—¶ *Fell there.* That is, fell in the sense of being completely routed, and for the most part slain, though these kings and others, it appears from v. 13, 17, 21, survived.—¶ *And they that remained fled to the mountain.* Heb.

הַנִּשְׁאָרִים *the survivors.* 'Mountain' is here to be understood as a collective singular for mountains or mountainous regions in the vicinity. 'It is still a common practice in the East for the inhabitants of towns and villages to hasten for safety to the mountains in times of alarm and danger, or at least to send their valuable property away. The moveables of the Asiatics, in camps, villages, and towns, are astonishingly few compared with those which the refinements of European life render necessary. A few carpets, kettles, and dishes of tinned copper, compose the bulk of their property, which can speedily be packed up, and sent away on the backs of camels or mules, with the women and children mounted on the baggage. In this way a large village or town is in a few hours completely gutted, and the inhabitants, with every stick and rag belonging to them, can place themselves in safety in the mountains. The writer of this note travelled in Koordistan in 1829, following, in one part of the journey, the course which had recently been taken by the Persian troops in their march from Tabreez to Sulimanieh. He came to one large village which had been partially burnt by the

12 And they took Lot, Abram's <sup>q</sup>brother's son, <sup>r</sup>who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

<sup>q</sup> ch. 12. 5. <sup>r</sup> ch. 13. 12.

Persians, who had also maltreated the inhabitants, who had afterwards fled to the mountains. The news of this transaction having been carried overnight to the next large village, about twenty miles distant, the Persians, on their arrival there the next day, found it completely deserted by the inhabitants, who had, in the short interval, removed with all their live stock and goods to the mountains. He found it in this condition a fortnight later; the inhabitants being afraid to come back till the soldiers should have returned from their expedition. Burckhardt, in his 'Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys,' p. 337, mentions that, when the Wahabys menaced Damascus in 1810, the inhabitants sent off all their valuable property to the mountains of Lebanon.' *Pict. Bible.*

11. *Took all the goods.* Or, all the substance. The word is singular in the original, implying collectively all their moveable property. The Greek renders it somewhat strangely *την ιππονα* *πασαν all their horse-force*; a kind of property which they were very unlikely to possess.—¶ *And all their victuals.* "Fulness of bread," was part of their sin, Ezek. 16. 49; and now 'cleanness of teeth' is made a piece of their punishment, in God's just judgment! *Trapp.*

12. *And they took Lot, &c.* A literal rendering of this verse, according to the order of the words in the original, is as follows;—"And they took Lot, and his goods, Abram's brother's son, and departed: and he was dwelling in Sodom." 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall be destroyed.' Prov. 13. 20. The passage is so constructed

13 ¶ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for 'he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite,

s ch. 13. 18.

brother of Eschol, and brother of Aner: 'and these were confederate with Abram.

t ver. 24.

as to give a sort of melancholy emphasis to the fact of Lot's dwelling in Sodom, which is entirely lost sight of in our translation. The unhappy man now begins to reap the bitter consequences of taking up his abode in the midst of the habitations of wickedness. 'That wealth, which was the cause of his former quarrels, is made a prey to merciless heathens; that place, which his eye covetously chose, betrays his life and goods. How many Christians, whilst they have looked at gain, have lost themselves?' *Bp. Hall.*

13. And told Abram the Hebrew. Heb. יִרְגַּד לְאַבְרָם הָעִבְרִי. Gr. ἀγγεῖλιν Ἀβραμ τῷ περατῇ told Abram the passenger. This is the first instance of the occurrence of the word 'Hebrew.' It may perhaps be applied to Abraham here for distinction' sake, to intimate that however closely connected for a time by league or friendship with his Amoritish neighbours, Mamre and his brethren, he was still mindful of his extraction and his destiny, and had not suffered himself to become a naturalized Canaanite. As to the origin of the term, opinions are much divided. Modern interpreters, particularly of the German school, incline for the most part to have recourse to the etymology of the word, and as עִבְרִי *aber* has the import of transition or passage, contend that the term was first applied to or taken by Abraham, as an epithet to distinguish him as one that had come from beyond the Euphrates. According to this hypothesis 'Abram the Hebrew' is equivalent to 'Abram the Transfluvian, or Trans-euphratean.' In this they are plainly countenanced by the rendering of the

Septuagint, which is adopted by several of the early Greek fathers, principally no doubt on the authority of that version. The advocates of this opinion object to the derivation of the name from *Eber* or *Heber*, the great grandson of Shem, and one of the ancestors of Abraham, on the ground, that the Scriptures do not represent him as an historical personage of any special notoriety, and that no reason can be assigned why his name should now be first used as an appellative of Abraham, seeing that five generations had intervened between him and Eber, during which we have no evidence that it was employed as a patronymic at all. But to this it may be answered, that no other descendant of his sustained the same relation as did Abraham to the great promise made to Shem, ch. 9. 26, 27, on which we would refer to the considerations adduced in our note on that passage. But apart from this, the philological reasons appear to us sufficient to warrant this view of the origin of the name. For (1) had the original עִבְרִי *ibri* been intended to convey the import of *passer-over* which the Sept. assigns to it, grammatical propriety would have required the participial form עוֹבֵר *ober*, which has that distinct meaning. (2.) The analogy of proper names ending in *yod* (י) decidedly confirms this mode of understanding it. Most of the patronymic and gentile nouns in the language are formed in the same way. Thus מוֹאבִּי *Moabite* from מוֹאֵב *Moab*; דָּנִי *Danite* from דָּן *Dan*; כְּלֵבִי *Calebite* from כֵּלֵב *Caleb*; אֱלֹנִי *Elonite* from אֵלֹן *Elon*: and so in a multitude of similar cases. Why not suppose then

14 And when Abram heard that <sup>u</sup> his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained ser-

u ch. 13. 18.

that עבר *Eberite* (Hebrew) comes from עבר *Eber*. Such names are almost invariably derived either as above from a person, some ancestor of distinction, or from a place, country, or city, which imparts its denomination to an individual, as מצרי *Mitzri, an Egyptian*; ערבי *Arbi, an Arabian*; שילוני *Shiloni, a Shilonite*. But as the name עברי *ibri* has no local reference which can account for its use in this connection, we seem to be forced to resolve it into a *patronymic* term, and if so, to what origin can it be traced with more probability than to עבר *Eber*? (3.) The passage Num. 24. 24, goes strikingly to corroborate the present interpretation; 'And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur, and shall afflict Eber.' Here as by 'Ashur' is meant the sons of Ashur, or Assyrians, so by 'Eber' are meant the sons of Eber, or Hebrews; and accordingly, while the Sept. in the former text renders עברי by *παρνας passenger*, it here renders עבר by *Εβραίους, Hebrews*. For these reasons we feel little hesitation in tracing the epithet to Heber. — ¶ *For he dwelt, &c.* Heb. ודוּרָא שָׁכַן *and he was tabernacling*. There is no sufficient ground for rendering the particle *and* by the illative 'for.' It would appear from our mode of rendering as if the latter clause of the verse were intended to assign a *reason* for the fact mentioned in the former. But for this there is no foundation in the original. — ¶ *These were confederate with Abram.* Heb. בעלי ברית *Baali berith*; i. e. *lords or masters of covenant*; an idiom of frequent occurrence

*vants*, <sup>w</sup> born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* <sup>x</sup> unto Dan.

w ch. 15. 3. & 17. 12, 27. Eccles 2. 7. x Deut. 34. 1. Judg. 18. 29.

in Heb. in which 'Baal,' *lord*, has for the most part the signification of 'possessor, proprietor,' expressing often to the following noun the relation of *addictedness*, or *habitual usage*; as Gen. 37. 19. 'Dreamer;' Heb. 'lord of dreams;' i. e. addicted to dreaming; Gen. 49. 23. 'Archers;' Heb. 'lords of arrows;' i. e. inured to the use of arrows, 2 Kings 1. 8. 'Hairy man;' Heb. 'lord of hair;' i. e. possessor of hair; Prov. 22. 24. 'Angry man;' Heb. 'lord of anger;' i. e. one habitually given to the indulgence of anger. So 'lords of covenant' implies those who were allies of long standing and peculiar intimacy; who habitually stood by the patriarch in this relation. Gr. 'Sworn friends.'

14. *Abram heard that his brother was taken captive.* Lot was Abraham's nephew, but he is called here his 'brother' in conformity to the usage so common in the Scriptures, which extends that term to all near kindred. — ¶ *Armed.* Heb. יָרֵק *yarek, draw out*; from a root signifying to *unsheath a sword*, or to *draw out any weapon of war*; equivalent perhaps to 'put them in readiness,' as a sword when *drawn* is ready for execution. Gr. ἀριθμητοὶ *numbered, mustered*. — ¶ *Trained.* Heb. הֵנִיךָ *catechized, initiated, instructed*, whether in civil or sacred things, but especially the latter. It is, however, very improbable that the peaceful patriarch, who was so much engaged in the worship of God wherever he sojourned, should have made his household establishment a military school, 'training' his domestics in the murderous arts of war. On the contrary, their 'training' was undoubtedly

in the doctrines and duties of religion. But as these foreign kings, in their indiscriminate abduction of the inhabitants of the conquered cities, had carried away Lot who was dwelling peaceably as a sojourner among them, having had no concern in the war or its causes, Abraham deemed the occasion such as to justify him in fitting out an expedition for his recovery, at the same time relying more upon the aid of Providence than upon the skill or numbers of his followers.—¶ *Born in his own house.* Heb. ילְדֵי בֵּיתוֹ *the in-born of his house*; in opposition to those acquired by purchase or otherwise from abroad. 'The word translated *servant* generally denotes what we should call a slave. In subsequent passages we shall indeed have occasion to remark on humble friends or disciples performing servile offices and therefore called 'servants;' and also on the Jewish slaves whom their own countrymen held in bondage for a limited time, and under defined restrictions. But the mass of the servants mentioned in the Scripture history were absolute and perpetual slaves. They were strangers, either purchased or taken prisoners in war. They and their progeny were regarded as completely the property of their masters, who could exchange or sell them at pleasure, could inflict what punishments they pleased, and even, in some cases, put them to death. Abraham's 'servants' were manifestly of this description. This form of slavery is still common in the East; and the facts which the book of Genesis brings under our notice show how little Asiatic usages have altered after the lapse of almost four thousand years. The condition of slavery in Mohammedan Asia is, however, unattended, except in very rare instances, with the revolting circumstances which we usually associate with the word. The term 'slave' itself is not regarded as one of opprobrium, nor does it convey the idea

of a degraded condition. Slaves are generally treated with such kindness and favour, that they commonly become much attached to their masters, and devoted to their interest. They do not till the fields, or work in manufactories. Their employment is almost wholly of a domestic nature, and their labour light. This is particularly the case with those who are purchased young and brought up in the family, and still more with those who, like Abraham's, are 'born in the house.' Few Europeans would do for their hired servants what the Asiatics do for their slaves, or repose such entire confidence in them. Illustrations on this subject will occur as we proceed. Meanwhile it is obvious, that as Abraham had among the slaves 'born in his own house,' 318 men fit to bear arms, exclusive of purchased slaves, old men, women, and children, he must have been regarded as a powerful chief by the petty princes among whom he dwelt. Hence, a few chapters on, ch. 23. 6, the children of Heth say to him, 'My lord, thou art a mighty prince among us.' *Pict. Bible.*—¶ *Pursued them unto Dan.* 'We learn from Judges, 18. 7, that this place was called Laish until taken by the Danites, who gave it the name by which it is here mentioned. As this event did not occur till long after the death of Moses, who never mentions the old name, that of Dan must have been interpolated by another hand, that the reference might be the more clearly understood. This and other interpolations of existing for ancient names are supposed to have been made by Ezra, when he revised the Old Testament Scriptures. Being at the northern end of Palestine, as Beersheba was at the southern, 'from Dan to Beersheba' became a proverbial expression to designate the entire length of the kingdom. It was situated near the sources of the Jordan; and if that river derived its



15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night, and <sup>y</sup> smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which <sup>is</sup> on the left hand of Damascus.

y Is. 41. 2, 3.

name from the town, the name must also be interpolated in the books of Moses, in the place of some more ancient name not preserved. This is probable enough; but to avoid this conclusion, some writers prefer to derive the name of the river from the verb *Jared*, 'to descend,' on account of the full and rapid course of the stream. The town of Dan is commonly identified with the *Paneas* of heathen writers, the present *Banias*. This identity does not seem indisputable. We may, however, state that the name was derived from the worship of Pan, to which a cavern, described by Josephus, was here consecrated. The town was greatly enlarged and embellished by the Tetrarch, Herod Philip, who changed its name to *Cæsarea*, in honour of the Emperor Tiberius, to which the adjunct *Philippi* was added, to distinguish it from the *Cæsarea* on the coast. Its name was afterwards changed to *Neronius*, in compliment to Nero. *Banias* is situated in a pleasant and fertile neighbourhood, at the base of a mountain called *Djebel Heish*. It is now merely a village, containing at most 150 houses, chiefly occupied by Turks. The river of *Banias* rises to the north-east of the village, on approaching which it passes under a good bridge, near which there are some remains of the ancient town. No walls remain, but great quantities of stone and architectural fragments are strewed around. About three miles east by south from the village are the remains of a strong and extensive fortress, called the 'Castle of *Banias*,' situated on the summit of a mountain; and to the south of the

16 And he brought back <sup>z</sup> all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

z ver. 11, 12.

village there is another ruined fortress of similar construction. Some travellers attribute these castles to the Arabian caliphs, and others to the crusades and consider that one of the two (they differ in saying which) probably occupies the site, and includes some of the materials of a temple which Herod the Great erected here in honour of Augustus.' *Pict. Bible*.

15. And he divided himself against them--by night. Heb. *וַיַּחֲלֹק עִלְיָהֶם*; perhaps more correctly rendered, 'And he came upon them by stealth in the night, he and his servants.' The verb *חָלַק* signifies not only to part, to divide, to distribute, but also to be smooth, or soft; and in Hiphil to polish, to sooth, or flatter. And from this sense it may naturally take another, of doing any thing covertly or by stealth. Thus in Jer. 37. 12, it signifies to remove from a place by stealth, *leniter et placide se subducere*. Here it may mean that Abraham came upon them in the night by stealth and surprise, probably while they were asleep, as Josephus says he did, which accounts for his putting an army that must have been numerous, to flight with so small a force. It is not, however, to be supposed, that the 318 men of Abraham's own household made the whole of his force. *Eshcol* and *Aner* were with him, v. 24, and in their march through the country up to Dan, where they first came up with *Chedorlaomer*, they probably gathered additional numbers. Still the common interpretation of the word *חָלַק* may be admitted, and on this presumption the Editor of the Pictorial Bible remarks, 'He probably divided his forces, so

that a simultaneous rush was made upon the camp of the enemy from different quarters. Here again the usages of Arabian warfare assist us. Surprise, by sudden attacks, is their favourite mode of warfare. Some tribes consider it cowardly and disgraceful to make a night attack on a camp. But this is not the general feeling. When such an attack is resolved upon, the assailants so arrange their march that they may fall upon the camp about an hour before the first dawn, when they are tolerably certain to find the whole camp asleep. With some tribes it is then the custom to rush upon the tents, and knock down the principal tent-poles, thus enveloping the sleepers in their tent-cloths, which renders the victory easy even over superior forces. What greatly facilitates the success of such attacks is the general neglect of posting night-watches and sentinels, even when in the vicinity of an enemy. If an immediate attack is apprehended, all the males of an encampment, or all the soldiers of an expedition, remain watching their fires throughout the night. In the present transaction, we do not read of any men killed on either side. Probably none were. It is astonishing how little blood is shed by the Arabs in their most desperate actions, which more resemble frays among an unorganized rabble than a battle between soldiers. We may hear of a battle lasting a whole day without a man being killed on either side. Burckhardt says: 'When fifteen or sixteen men are killed in a skirmish, the circumstance is remembered as an event of great importance for many years by both parties.' *Pict. Bible.*—'On the left hand of Damascus.' Chal. 'On the north of Damascus;' probably a correct interpretation, as the Scriptures suppose the face to be directed to the east, where *right* and *left* are mentioned, if no other point of the compass be specified. 'The city is not here men-

tioned proleptically; for we find it noticed in ch. 15. 2, as the birth-place of Abraham's steward Eliezer; and it must therefore have been one of the earliest cities in the world, and is one of the very few that have maintained a flourishing existence in all ages. It is situated in east long.  $36^{\circ} 25'$ , and north lat.  $33^{\circ} 27'$ , in the northwest of an extensive and remarkably level plain, which is open eastward beyond the reach of vision, but is bounded in every other direction by mountains, the nearest of which—those of Salehie, to the northwest—are not quite two miles from the city. These hills give rise to the river Barrady, and to various rivulets, which afford the city a most liberal supply of water, and render its district one of the most pleasant and fertile of Western Asia (see Note on 2 Kings, 5. 12). The district, within a circumference of from twenty to twenty-five miles, is thickly covered with well-watered gardens and orchards, in the midst of which stands the town itself. It thus appears as in a vast wood, and its almost innumerable public buildings, including an extensive citadel and a vast number of mosques, with their domes and minarets, give it a fine appearance as viewed from the neighbouring hills; but on approaching over the level plain, the plantations by which it is environed shroud it entirely from view. Its finest building is a grand mosque, of the Corinthian order, said to have been built as a cathedral church by the Emperor Heraclius. It was dedicated to St. John of Damascus, and is still called the mosque of St. John the Baptist by the Turks, who believe that in the latter days Jesus shall descend thereon, and from its summit require the adhesion of all his followers to the Moslem faith. The city is surrounded by an old wall of sun-dried brick, strengthened with towers; but this wall has fallen to decay, and the town has so greatly extended

beyond its limits, that the number of houses without the wall greatly exceeds that within. The houses in the city have flat roofs, while those in suburbs have domes. Damascus is said to contain 500 mansions entitled to be called palaces; and the general splendour of its houses is much extolled in the East. But little of this is visible in the streets, which in general present walls of mud or sun-dried brick, which fill the narrow streets with dust in dry weather, and render them perfect quagmires when it rains. The houses themselves are built with the same materials, although stone might be easily obtained from the adjoining mountains. The streets present scarcely any windows, and only low and mean-looking doors; but these often conduct to large interior courts paved with marble, refreshed by gushing fountains, and surrounded by apartments ornamented and furnished in the best and richest oriental taste. The thirsty Arabs from the Desert regard Damascus with rapture, and are never tired of expatiating on the freshness and verdure of its orchards, the variety and richness of its fruits, and, more than all, its numerous streams, and the clearness of its rills and fountains. There is a tradition, that Mohammed, coming to the city, viewed it with great admiration from the mountain Salehi, and then turned away, refusing to approach, with the remark, that there was but one Paradise designed for man, and he was determined that *his* should not be in this world; but there is no historical foundation for this story. Damascus is about six miles in circumference, and its population is estimated by Mr. Buckingham at 143,000; of whom 90,000 are native Syrian Arabs, 10,000 Turks, 15,000 Jews, and 25,000 Christians. But Dr. Richardson does not estimate the Christian population at more than 12,000. Damascus is the rendezvous of many thousand pilgrims who proceed to Mecca in one

great body every year, and many of whom make a considerable stay before the caravan departs, and most of whom unite commercial with religious objects, loading their beasts with the produce of their own countries, which they dispose of on the road, bringing back in the same manner the products of India, received from Jidda, the port of Mecca. This has contributed greatly to the prosperity of Damascus, which is also the emporium of an extensive caravan trade with the ports of the Mediterranean on the west, and with Bagdad on the east. Damascus has obtained fame for some of its manufactures. The fine temper of its sword-blades has long been proverbial. This reputation has, however, of late years much declined; but the Damascenes still excel in the art of inlaying metals with gold. The manufacture of the kind of silk called 'Damask,' originated here. It would seem from 1 Kings, 11. 23, 24, that Damascus first became in the time of David or Solomon the capital of an independent kingdom which afterwards, as the 'kingdom of Syria,' was engaged in frequent wars with the Jews. It was ultimately annexed to the empire of Assyria, and afterwards, with the rest of Western Asia, passed to the Greeks, then to the Romans, and at last to the Arabians, under whom Damascus became for a time the capital of the khalifat, when Moawiyah, its governor, assumed that office, in opposition to Ali. It underwent many changes during the disorders of the middle ages, and was finally conquered, along with all Syria, by the Sultan Selim. In the late war between the Porte and the Pasha of Egypt, Damascus was taken by the troops of the latter, under his son Ibrahim Pasha, and it still remains subject to his authority, having been ceded to him by the treaty of peace in 1833. The inhabitants of Damascus have the reputation of being the most haughty and intolerant people of Tur-

17 ¶ And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (<sup>b</sup> after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him,) at the val-

ley of Shaveh, which is the <sup>c</sup> king's dale.

18 And <sup>d</sup> Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was <sup>e</sup> the priest of <sup>f</sup> the most high God.

a Judg. 11. 34. 1 Sam. 13. 6. b Heb. 7. 1.

c 2 Sam. 18. 18. d Heb. 7. 1. e Ps. 110. 4. Heb. 5. 6. Mic. 6. 9. Acts 16. 17. Ruth 3. 10. 2 Sam. 2. 5.

key, but the measures of Mehemet Ali have already tended greatly to subdue or control their former spirit.' *Pict. Bible*.

17. *The king of Sodom went out to meet him.* This expedition of Abraham and his friends would naturally excite great attention among the Canaanites. At the very time when all must have been given up for lost, lo, they are, without any efforts of their own, recovered, and the spoilers spoiled! The little victorious band, now returning in peace, are hailed by every one that meets them. The kings of the different cities go forth to congratulate them, and to thank them as the deliverers of their country. If Abraham had been one of those marauders whom he defeated, he would have followed up his victory, and made himself master of the whole country; which he might probably have done with ease in their present enfeebled and scattered condition. But the principles by which he was governed as a servant of God prevented him from doing this.—¶ *The valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.* A valley near Jerusalem, supposed to be to the north of the city, the direction which would naturally be taken to meet one returning from Damascus, where Absalom afterward erected a monumental pillar, 2 Sam. 18. 18. Gr. 'This is the field of the kings.' Chal. 'the valley-plain of refreshing for the king.'

18. *Melchizedek.* Heb. מלכי צדק i. e. king of righteousness. A much more illustrious personage than the king of Sodom is here said to have come forth to meet Abraham on his re-

turn from the slaughter of the kings, respecting whom the bare recital of the different opinions that have been entertained would fill a volume. The prevalent hypothesis among the Jews has ever been that he was no other than Shem, the son of Noah, who was undoubtedly still alive in the days of Abraham. Thus the Targum of Jonathan, 'But Melchizedek, he is Shem, the son of Noah, king of Jerusalem.' Thus too the Jerusalem Targum, 'But Melchizedek, king of Jerusalem, he is Shem, who was the great priest of the Most High.' But to this it is reasonably objected, (1.) That no sufficient cause can be assigned why Moses, who has all along hitherto spoken of Shem under his own proper name, should here veil his identity under a different one. (2.) It is inconsistent with what we know of Shem that he should be said to be by the Apostle, Heb. 'without father and without mother,' since his genealogy is clearly given in the Scriptures, and the line of his progenitors can be at once traced up to its fountain-head in Adam. (3.) It is in the highest degree improbable that he should be a reigning king in the land of Canaan, which was in the possession of his brother's son; nor is it easy to perceive how Abraham could be said to 'sojourn there as in a strange country,' if his distinguished ancestor Shem were at that time a co-resident with him in the same country. (4.) On this theory the priesthood of Melchizedek, i. e. of Shem, would not be of a different order from Levi's; directly contrary to the assertion of the Apostle

Heb. 7. 6, and to the whole drift of his argument. For if Melchizedek were Shem, Levi was in *his* loins as well as in the loins of Abraham, from which it follows, that while he paid tithes in the loins of one of his ancestors he received them in another, that is, paid them to himself; which is absurd. The identity of Melchizedek and Shem, therefore, cannot with any show of reason be consistently held. Others accordingly rejecting the Jewish tradition on this head, have adopted the opinion that Melchizedek was the Son of God himself. To this conclusion they are led by an unwillingness to allow that any mere man was superior to Abraham. But in this case we can hardly suppose the Apostle would have said that Melchizedek 'was made like to the Son of God;' or that Christ was constituted a Priest 'after the order of Melchizedek;' or in other words, that he was a type of himself! The most probable view therefore of the true character of Melchizedek is that given by Josephus, viz. that he was a Canaanitish prince, a pious and religious man; a personage eminently raised up by God, whose genealogy was perhaps designedly veiled in mystery, that he might be in this, as in other things, a type of Christ. He is mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures only in the 110th Psalm and in the epistle to the Hebrews, where the Apostle, aiming to shew the pre-eminence of Christ's priesthood over that of Aaron, avails himself of the somewhat remarkable coincidences which happened to subsist between what is here related of Melchizedek, and what he designed to affirm of Christ. As Melchizedek combined in his own person the dignity both of king and priest, this fact enabled him to illustrate more strikingly to the Jews to whom he wrote the union of the same offices in Christ, who sits 'a priest upon his throne.' Again, as far as appears from the sacred record,

Melchizedek was a priest, not by inheritance, but by immediate divine appointment. Though as a man he doubtless had a father and mother, and was born and died like other men, yet as nothing is said on these points by the historian, the Apostle, holding him forth precisely in the light which Moses does, and in no other, says that he was 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually.' That is, he derived his office from no predecessor and delivered it down to no successor, but stands before us in the sacred record single and alone, constituting himself an order of priesthood. In this respect he was eminently 'made like the Son of God;' who was also a priest, not after the manner of the sons of Aaron, by descent from their predecessors, but after the similitude of Melchizedek, that is, by an immediate divine constitution. These are the grand points of resemblance between Melchizedek and Christ, of which the Apostle makes so happy a use in writing to the Hebrews; and we think it by no means unlikely, that Moses, penning his narrative under divine guidance, was moved to suppress the various particulars respecting the birth and parentage of Melchizedek, and the commencement and close of his priesthood, and to introduce him thus briefly and abruptly into the thread of his history, for the very purpose of affording to another inspired penman, in after ages, the means of so pertinently and forcibly illustrating this sublime feature of Christ's official character. — *King of Salem.* Heb. מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם *melek shalem*, i. e. *king of peace*, an import of the title of which the Apostle makes use Heb. 7. 2. Whether this were the same place with that which afterwards attained such eminence under the name of Jerusalem, is somewhat doubtful, though proba-



19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the

most high God, & possessor of heaven and earth.

g ver. 22. Mat. 11. 25.

bilities are in favour of the supposition that it was, Ps. 76. 1, 2. Bochart and others take it for the place called Salim on the banks of the Jordan, where John baptized, John, 3. 23. But as there was a 'king's dale' near this Salem, v. 17, and also in the vicinity of Jerusalem, the latter was probably the seat of Melchizedek's residence.—¶

*Brought forth bread and wine.* As it is evidently the post-resurrection priesthood of Christ which was prefigured by that of Melchizedek, we see no objection to considering the 'bread and wine' which he brought forth for the refreshment of Abraham and his followers, as an adumbration of the sacramental elements, which Christ in the institution of the supper has provided for the weary soldiers of the cross.

—¶ *And he was the priest of the most high God.* Heb. כֹּהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן *priest to the most high God.* Chal. 'Minister before the most high God.' The leading idea conveyed by the original term for 'priest' כֹּהֵן *cohen*, is that of *ministration in general*, but yet, as predicated of him who is next in rank to the supreme power. Thus, 2 Sam. 8. 18, 'And David's sons were chief rulers;' Heb. 'cohens,' *priests*, is rendered literally in the parallel passage, 1 Chron. 18. 17, 'And David's sons were the first at the king's hand.' So also 2 Sam. 20. 26, 'And Ira also the Jairite, was a chief ruler about David;' Heb. 'a priest to David.' In its general usage, however, it is appropriated as the office-title of one who performs the functions of a *sacrificer, an offerer of sacred oblations to God, and an intercessor for, and blessing of, the people*, 1 Chron. 23. 13. Under the gospel dispensation this office is abolished among men, its functions being cen-

tered in Christ. In the most ancient periods, among all nations whose records have reached us, the office of priest and king appear to have been conjoined in the same person.

19. *And he blessed him, and said, &c.* That is, Melchizedek blessed Abraham, in doing which he performed one of the characteristic functions of a priest, whose duty it was 'to bless in the name of the Lord for ever.' 1 Chron. 23. 13, Num. 6. 23, 27. Viewed in this light, the act of blessing on the part of Melchizedek would imply more than a personal well-wishing; it would be prophetic. In pronouncing a benediction, he would set his seal to what God had done before him. It is not unlikely that he might have known Abraham previously to this, and have been well acquainted with his being a favourite of heaven, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; and to whose posterity God had promised the land of Canaan. If so, his blessing him in so solemn a manner implied his devout acquiescence in the divine will, even though it would be at the expense of his ungodly countrymen.—¶ *Possessor of heaven and earth.* Heb. קִנְיָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ. The idea of a 'possessor' is very intimately related to that of a 'disposer,' especially when, as in the present case, the possession is founded upon creation; and we think it highly probable that the words were intended to convey a tacit acknowledgment of the sovereign right of the most high God, who had created all things, to make such an allotment of the earth or any part of it as he saw fit. The speaker, therefore, in employing this language virtually puts his Amen to the Divine promise which secured to Abraham and his seed

20 And <sup>h</sup> blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes <sup>i</sup> of all.

h ch. 24. 27. i Heb. 7. 4.

the possession of the land of Canaan. The rendering of the Sept. and the Vulg. 'who *created* the heaven and the earth,' is not exact, and has probably flown from confounding the *literal* with an *inferential* sense of the original word.

20. *Blessed be the most high God.* This discloses the native working of a truly pious and devout spirit, which cannot contentedly stop short of the fountain-head of all blessing. Instead of launching out into encomiums on Abraham's valour and skill as a warrior, he rises in his ascription of praise to the God of Abraham, who had graciously conferred the victory upon his servant. — ¶ *He gave him tithes of all.* That is, Abraham gave to Melchizedek, as the Apostle assures us, Heb. 7. 2. The expression is thought by some too general to be confined to a tenth of the spoils taken from the confederate kings, but as it does not appear that he had any thing else there to tithe, we think it more probable that a tenth of the spoils is all that is meant, and in this we are evidently sustained by the testimony of Paul, Heb. 7. 4. As Melchizedek in this transaction had officiated in his priestly capacity as a kind of mediator between God and him, it was undoubtedly in this light that he regarded him in making the oblation. He gave him tithes, not as a friend, but as God's representative. The present was undoubtedly accompanied by sentiments of personal respect and gratitude, but it was principally designed as a tribute of piety to God. Considered in this light it was a very early and significant intimation of the debt of temporal support due to those

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king

who minister to men in spiritual things, who are to be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake, and who, while they serve at the altar, are ordained to live of the altar.

21. *Give me the persons.* Heb. הַנַּפְשִׁים *the soul*; col. sing. for 'souls,' correctly rendered 'persons,' according to a usage of very frequent occurrence. It means of course the captive men and women. Gr. 'Give me the men.' It would seem that while these things were going on between Melchizedek and Abraham, the king of Sodom stood by and heard what passed, but without taking any particular interest in it. What occurred between these two great characters appears to have made no impression upon him. Apparently he thought of nothing, and cared for nothing, but what respected himself. Though there is no evidence that he could claim any right at least to the goods, yet he speaks in a manner as if he would be thought not a little generous in relinquishing them. — ¶ *And take the goods to thyself.* 'It would seem that here the king claims his own due, and allows Abraham his. According to Arab usage Abraham had an undoubted right to the recovered goods and cattle. The custom is, if an enemy has spoiled an Arab camp, and carried away some of the persons as prisoners, and if the whole be afterwards recovered by another party, for the persons to be restored, but for the property to remain in the possession of those by whom it was recaptured. This elucidation, which has escaped the notice of annotators, exalts the conduct of Abraham in declining to receive his due, and detracts from the generosity for which

of Sodom, I <sup>k</sup> have lifted up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, <sup>1</sup> the possessor of heaven and earth,

<sup>k</sup> Ex. 6. 8. Dan. 12. 7. Rev. 10. 5, 6. 1 ver. 19. ch. 21. 33.

the king of Sodom has obtained credit. Indeed we see that Abraham himself admits the right of his friends to that which, for himself, he 'declined.' *Pict. Bible.*

22. *I have lifted up mine hand.* A Hebraism for 'I have sworn,' derived from the custom, to which there are frequent allusions in the Bible, of elevating the right hand in the act of taking an oath. Abraham doubtless knew the man, and perceiving his affected generosity, gave him to understand that he had already decided, and even sworn, in the presence of the most high God, what he would do in respect to that part of the spoils which had previously belonged to him. This answer of Abraham is somewhat remarkable. His having determined upon his course *before* the king of Sodom met him, implies something dishonourable in the character of that prince. He must have been well known to Abraham as a vain-boasting, unprincipled man, or he would not have resolved, in so solemn a manner, to preserve himself clear from the very shadow of an obligation to him. It is possible that he might have thrown out some malignant insinuations against Lot and his uncle on the score of their religion. At any rate, he had become for some reason fixed in his purpose not to become in any sense a debtor to the king of Sodom. In this he may have designed to honour the promise of blessing which had been made to him. If the possessor of heaven and earth has engaged to provide for him he will not be beholden to an earthly potentate, especially where his motives in so doing were liable to be miscon-

23 That = I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou

m So Esther 9. 15, 16.

strued; where it might be said that he was prompted to the rescue of Lot more by the hope of plunder than the spirit of benevolence. His conduct in this emergency affords a good hint to Christians. They are really so rich in their own inheritance that it ill becomes them to crave the possessions of others.

23. *That I will not take.* Heb. אם אקח *if I will take*; an imperfect mode of expression peculiar to the original Scriptures, and frequently occurring in oaths. It is equivalent to a negative, as rendered in our version. Thus in like manner Ps. 95. 11, 'Unto whom I swear in my wrath *that they should not enter my rest* (Heb. *if they shall enter my rest*);' explained by the Apostle, Heb. 3. 18, 'that they *should not enter into his rest*.' So Mark, 8. 12, 'Verily I say unto you, there shall be no sign given unto this generation (Gr. *if a sign shall be given*);' whereas in the parallel passage Mat. 16. 4, it stands, 'There shall no sign be given it.' Comp. Gen. 21. 23.—ף *From a thread even to a shoe-latchet.* Heb. מחוט ועד שרוך נעל. This was probably a proverbial expression of diminution, equivalent to 'the meanest thing.' As to the original חוט *hoot* rendered *thread* nothing satisfactory can be determined respecting it, farther than that it denotes some kind of fastening either to the hair or the dress. 'This may refer to the red *thread* worn round the neck or the arm, and which binds on the amulet; or the *string* with which females tie up their hair. The *latchet* I suppose to mean the *thong* of the sandal, which

shouldest say, I have made Abram rich :

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men <sup>a</sup> which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre ; let them take their portion.

n ver. 13.

goes over the top of the foot and betwixt the great and little toes. It is proverbial to say, should a man be accused of taking away some valuable article, which belongs to another, 'I have not taken away even a piece of the *thong* of your worn-out sandals.' *Roberts.*

24. *Save only that which the young men have eaten.* Heb. *הַעֲרִירִים*. The leading idea to be attached in numerous instances to the phrase 'young men' is that of *service* or *ministry* instead of *youthful age*. Thus Est. 2. 2, 'Then said the king's *servants* that ministered unto him ;' Heb. 'Then said the king's *young men*.' Neh. 5. 15, 'Nay even their *servants* bare rule over the people ;' Heb. 'their *young men*.' Ex. 24. 5, 'And he sent *young men* of the children of Israel which offered burnt-offerings ;' i. e. *servants* ; men who performed the burdensome parts of the ritual. Acts, 5. 6, 'And the *young men* arose and wound him up, and carried him out and buried him ;' i. e. the *servants*, ministers, or deacons of the church ; men doubtless of adult years. So those who by one Evangelist, Luke, 12. 45, are called in Gr. 'young men and young maids,' are by another, Mat. 24. 49, denominated 'fellow-servants.'

#### CHAPTER XV.

1. *After these things.* Heb. *אֲחֵרֵי כֵּן* after these words ; i. e. these things spoken of. 'Word' is often us-

#### CHAPTER XV.

**A**FTER these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram <sup>a</sup> in a vision, saying, <sup>b</sup> Fear not, Abram : I *am* thy <sup>c</sup> shield, and thy exceeding <sup>d</sup> great reward.

<sup>a</sup> Dan. 10. 1. Acts 10. 10, 11. <sup>b</sup> ch. 26. 24. Dan. 10. 12. Luke 1. 13, 30. <sup>c</sup> Ps. 3. 3. & 5. 12. & 84. 11. & 91. 4. & 119. 114. <sup>d</sup> Ps. 16. 5. & 58. 11. Prov. 11. 18.

ed in the Scriptures for *thing*, or that which is the *subject of words*. Thus Lev. 5. 2, an 'unclean thing' is in the Heb. 'an unclean word ;' Deut. 17. 5, 'wicked thing,' Heb. 'wicked word ;' and so in innumerable other cases. On the ground of this usage we are perhaps to explain our Saviour's declaration, Mat. 12. 37, 'By thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned,' i. e. by thy *deeds* ; for *conduct* is constructive or virtual language. Accordingly the Apostle speaking Heb. 11. 14, of the *conduct* of the believing patriarchs, remarks, 'For they that *say* such things declare plainly that they seek a country ;' i. e. whose *actions* say such things, or, in other words, who *do* such things. So also Eccl. 10. 3, 'When he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he *saith* to every one that he is a fool ;' i. e. his *conduct* proclaims him to be one.—¶ *The word of the*

*Lord came to Abram.* Heb. *וַיִּבְרַח אֲבְרָם* was to Abram ; i. e. efficaciously was ; was made to be. This is the first instance of the occurrence of the phrase 'word of the Lord,' as applied to a divine communication. It is the usual way in which the fact of a special revelation to the prophets is afterwards announced. See the Prophets passim.—¶ *In a vision.* Heb. *בַּמַּחֲזֶה* in a sight. Gr. *ἐν ὁραματι*. id. Chal. *בְּנִבְיָא* in a prophecy ; i. e. in a prophetic vision. Prophets were in the earliest ages called *seers* (Heb. *חֹזֵה*, *רֹאֶה*), 1 Sam. 9. 9. 2 Sam. 24. 11, and

■ And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, <sup>e</sup> seeing

■ Acts 7. 5.

a *prophecy* in Is. 1. 1, is called a *vision*, in accordance with what is said Num. 12. 6, 'If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him *in a vision* (בַּמְרֹאֶה). There is great obscurity resting upon the modes of the divine communications to men, but when God is said to have appeared to any one even in a *vision*, it does not necessarily follow that the recipient of such a revelation was properly asleep. Though the night season and the state of sleep was often chosen for that purpose, and probably was in the present instance, yet in other cases the prophet was evidently thrown into a temporary trance, in which the exercise of the senses on outward objects was suspended. In other instances the will of heaven was imparted by the powerful agency of the Spirit of God, giving to the subject of it a strong perception and supernatural persuasion of the truth of the things revealed. See 'Hengstenberg's Christology,' p. 217. Keith's Transl. 1836.—¶ *Saying, Fear not.* As Abraham had defeated the kings mentioned in the last chapter with far inferior numbers, he may have thought it not unlikely that, in order to retrieve the disgrace, they might again rally and come upon him with a force which he should be unable to resist. Such an assurance, therefore, as he now received of the divine protection, must have been peculiarly seasonable and consolatory. Whether from a review of past difficulties, or from a prospect of augmented trials, or from an apprehension of disappointed hopes, the most eminent saints are prone at times to give way to discouragements; but God, who watches over the secret fears as well as the outward afflictions of his peo-

I go childless, and the steward of mine house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?

ple, interposes at the needful moment and ministers the support, confidence, and courage which they require.—¶ *I am thy shield.* Gr. 'I will protect thee.' Chal. 'My word shall be thy strength.' As thou wert shielded by my protection in the late engagement, so believe me to be to thee an ever-present defence. The same assurance is virtually given to all God's servants, Ps. 84. 11.—¶ *And thine exceeding great reward.* Rather, as the Heb. accents require, and as the Greek renders it, 'Thy reward shall be exceeding great.' Although there is nothing specifically said of the grounds of this reward, or of the nature of it, yet there can be little doubt that it was but another form of the gracious promise already made to Abraham of his being blest with a numerous seed, of his inheriting the land of Canaan, and of his finally becoming a fountain of blessing to the whole world. But as Abraham had done nothing to *merit* all this, if it is here spoken of as a *reward*, it could be only a *reward to faith*, and not to *works*; and it is in this view that the Apostle seems to allude to this very term as here employed, Rom. 4. 4, 'Now to him that worketh is the *reward* not reckoned of grace, but of debt.' The plea of rewardable works however did not hold in regard to Abraham; 'But to him that worketh not (that is not said to have worked, viz. Abraham), but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.'

2. And Abram said, Lord God what wilt thou give me. Rather, according to the Heb. מַה תֶּתֶן לִי *how wilt thou do (it) for me.* Such in numerous instances is the force of the original particle here rendered 'what.' Thus Gen.



3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and

he, 'one born in mine house is mine heir.

f ch. 14. 14.

44. 16, 'How (מה) shall we clear ourselves?' Job, 9. 2, 'How (מה) should man be just with God?' Abraham's thoughts instinctively reverted to the great promise, and he here suggests what he conceived, in the judgment of human reason, an insuperable obstacle to the fulfilment of this promise. He reverently inquires how it was possible that good word could be accomplished to him, so long as he was living and apparently like to die in a childless state? It is proper to remark, however, that the words of the common translation make a consistent sense in themselves, and do no violence to the original, implying that Abraham could find no comfort or happiness in any thing else, so long as the promise respecting a blessed seed remained unfulfilled or unfulfilling. Still the interpretation we have given we think a better one, as being equally consistent with the original and more natural in itself.—¶ *Seeing I go childless.* Heb.

הוֹלֵךְ עִרְרִי *am going childless*; i. e. am going out of the world. Thus the Targ. Jon. 'Seeing I depart out of the midst of this world.' Gr. ἀπολυμαί *ateknyos* *I am being dismissed, or let depart, childless*; the same word as that used by Simeon, Luke 2. 29. 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart (ἀπολυσῆς) in peace.' Compare 1 Chron. 17. 11 with 2 Sam. 17. 12, where 'go' and 'sleep' are evidently used as synonymous terms, signifying 'to die.' So also Ps. 39. 13, 'Spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence (אֵלֶּךְ), and be no more.' Ps. 58. 8, 'As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away (יִהְיֶה go),' i. e. let them die.—¶ *Steward of mine house.*

Heb. בֶּן מִשְׁקַל בֵּיתִי *son of administration or stewardship: filius discursi-*

*tationis, son of running about*; or one who occupies the station of head-servant in the midst of a numerous household. The idiom by which such an one is called a 'son of stewardship,' is of very frequent occurrence; thus 1 Kings, 1. 52, 'son of strength' for 'strong man'; Ezek. 4. 1, 'sons of captivity' for 'captives'; Ju. 48, 45, 'sons of uproar' for 'tumultuous persons,' &c. The Chal. reading is בַּר פִּרְנָסָא *bar parnasa, son of feeding, sustentation, or procuring*, in evident allusion to the office of a steward, whose business it is to 'give every one his portion of meat (food) in due season,' Luke 12. 42. The reason of Abraham's introducing the mention of the steward of his house in this connection, and the manner in which it bore upon the objection stated, will be apparent from the next verse, and the accompanying notes.—¶ *Is this Eliezer of Damascus.*

Heb. הַזֶּה דָּמֶשֶׂק אֱלִיעֶזֶר *this Damascene, or Damasco-man, Eliezer.* The name 'Eliezer' signifies 'help of God,' and from this name, especially as it is written Ex. 6. 25, 'Eleazer,' comes the apocopated 'Lazar,' and from this, by adding the termination *os*, the Gr. 'Lazaros; Eng. 'Lazarus.' Guided by this clew, we learn why it is that our Saviour, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16. 23, represents Lazarus as being 'in Abraham's bosom;' i. e. seated familiarly with him at the same table. It is because there is a covert allusion, in the person of Lazarus, to this same Eliezer, the patriarch's venerable steward. 'Since the discourse, Luke 16. 20, is concerning Abraham and Lazarus, who would not call to mind Abraham and Eleazer his servant, one born at Damascus, a Gentile by birth, and some time the

4 And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that <sup>e</sup> shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

g 2 Sam. 7. 12 & 16. 11. 2 Chron. 32. 21.

their apparent of Abraham, but shut out of the inheritance by the birth of Isaac, yet restored here into Abraham's bosom? Which I leave to the judgment of the reader, whether it might not hint the calling of the Gentiles into the faith of Abraham.' *Lightfoot*.

3. *One born in mine house is mine heir.* Heb. בן ביתי יורש אתי *a son of my house is inheriting me*; i. e. about to inherit, or destined or likely to inherit me. To 'inherit one' is a Hebraism for inheriting one's goods, or estate. Thus, Jer. 49. 1, 'Why then doth their king *inherit Gad*?' this is explained in the ensuing clause to import 'dwelling in his cities.' By the like idiom, 'to possess great nations,' Deut. 9. 1, is to possess their lands, cities, and substance; for the nations themselves were to be destroyed. So, Ps. 79. 7, 'They have devoured Jacob;' i. e. they have consumed his possessions. 2 Cor. 11. 20, 'Ye suffer if a man devour you;' i. e. devour your property. By one 'born in his house' is meant a home-born servant in opposition to those bought or obtained otherwise from without, and also from 'sons of the womb,' Prov. 31. 2, or one's own proper children. 'In Mohammedan Asia the slaves termed 'house-born' are regarded with peculiar esteem. They form part of their master's family, and their welfare is an object of his peculiar care. They are the most attached of his adherents, and often inherit a large share of his wealth. It is sometimes the practice of childless persons to adopt a favourite slave

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and <sup>h</sup> tell the <sup>i</sup> stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, <sup>k</sup> So shall thy seed be.

h Ps. 147. 4. i Jer. 33. 22. k ch. 22. 17. Ex. 32. 13. Deut. 1. 10. & 10. 22. 1 Chron 27. 23. Rom 4. 18. Heb. 11. 12. ch. 13. 16.

of this class as their own child and heir; or sometimes they purchase promising boys when young, and after having brought them up in their own faith, formally adopt them as their children.' *Pict. Bible*. Such appears to have been Abraham's idea in the present instance. Instead of thinking of adopting his nephew Lot, he speaks as if his faithful steward were the probable candidate for that honour.

4. *The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, &c.* God, in mercy to the patriarch, condescends to remove his doubts on this head, by assuring him that his heir should be the offspring of his own body. This he had not before done, but had merely given him a general promise that he should be blest with an innumerable seed, leaving it uncertain whether it should be by the increase of a natural or an adopted seed. But now his doubts on that head are fully resolved, the promise being renewed in so explicit a manner, that it was impossible he should afterwards mistake in regard to it. It is true, indeed, he was not yet expressly informed whether this promised seed should be the offspring of Sarah or of some other woman, but on this point also he was afterwards clearly instructed, Gen. 17. 16; teaching us that it sometimes pleases God to make known his will and impart his promises to his servants not all at once, but by gradual disclosures.

5. *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, &c.* If the 'vision' mentioned in the first verse was vouchsafed

6 And he <sup>l</sup>believed in the LORD; and he <sup>m</sup>counted it to him for righteousness.

7 And he said unto him, I am

<sup>l</sup> Rom. 4. 3, 9, 22. Gal. 3. 6. James 2. 23.  
<sup>m</sup> Ps. 106. 31.

to Abraham in the sleeping hours of night, we may easily conceive that it was early in the morning, before sunrise, that he was brought forth and bid to count, if he could, the number of the stars. And this, on the whole, seems the simplest mode of exposition, though Maimonides and other Jewish writers suppose that every thing related in this chapter was transacted in vision, in which state stars might be made to appear to the mental perception at noonday, as well as to the natural eye at midnight. This is indeed true, and it is true also that the Scriptures often represent that which is done in vision as if it were an historical fact, without clearly drawing the line between them, as in Jer. 13. 4, 5. Ezek. 8. 7, 9. But in the present case, as all the circumstances are consistent with the literal verity of the incidents recorded, we prefer this mode of interpretation, especially as an act of faith so highly commended as that of Abraham on this occasion would seem to have required the exercise of a waking and not of a sleeping or entranced mind. Whether the innumerable host of stars were designed to shadow forth the countless multitude of his natural or his spiritual seed is not apparent from the narrative, nor is it certain that a distinction of this kind was intended. It was probably designed as a *general* intimation including both, though with a dominant reference to his seed in the line of Isaac and Jacob. This is to be inferred from the passages which speak of the fulfilment of promise, as Deut. 10. 22. 1 Chron. 27. 23. Neh. 9. 23.

6 And he believed in the LORD. Heb. *אֱמָן בַּיהוָה* believed in Jehovah.

the LORD that <sup>n</sup>brought thee out of <sup>o</sup>Ur of the Chaldees, <sup>p</sup>to give thee this land to inherit it.

<sup>n</sup> ch. 12. 1. <sup>o</sup> ch. 11. 28, 31. <sup>p</sup> Ps. 105. 42, 44.  
Rom. 4. 13.

Chal. *הֶאֱמִין בַּמֶּלֶךְ דִּיר* believed in the Word of the Lord. Gr. *ἐπίστευεν τῷ Θεῷ* believed God, omitting the 'in,' which is followed by the Apostle, Rom. 4. 3. In numerous other instances in the New Testament the Greek verb *πίστευω* to believe is followed by the particles *eis*, *ἐν*, or *ἐν*, *in*, as if there were a designed distinction, at least in some cases, between 'believing' and 'believing in;' and perhaps it may not be improper to say, that while the devils 'believe' Christ, a true penitent only can 'believe in' him. The Hebrew term *אָמֵן* *aman*, from whence comes the familiar 'Amen' so be it, signifies to be firm, fixed, stable, sure; and in the Hiphil conjugation, which is here employed, followed by *ב* in or *ל* to, to establish one's self, or one's faith, firmly in or towards an object, to deem, or account, or make sure to one's self, and so to lean upon, confide in, or trust to, any thing as stable and steadfast. Hence as applied to the act of a believing agent in reference to divine promises, it denotes a degree of assured confidence amounting, as it were, to a creative efficacy, making to exist, substantiating, confirming the thing believed, 'calling things which are not as though they were.' Thus 'faith is the substance (the substantiating principle) of things hoped for;' and in this view Christ is denominated the 'Amen, the faithful and true witness,' from his being the ground of the most fixed and stable confidence, whose fidelity or trust-worthiness may be relied upon with unbounded assurance. The circumstances which gave so much efficacy and value to the faith of Abraham

on this occasion are so forcibly recited in the Epistle to the Romans, that we adduce the words of the Apostle as the most apposite commentary which can be given upon this passage. Rom. 4. 18—22, 'Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.' —*¶ And he counted it to him for righteousness.* Heb. *וַיִּחְשְׁבֶהָ לֵּךְ צְדָקָה* and he counted it to him righteousness. Gr. *ἐλογισθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην* it was reckoned, accounted, imputed to him for righteousness. Nearly all the ancient versions agree with the Sept. in rendering the verb in the passive, which shows that they understood it as constructed with an indefinite nominative, equivalent to the passive, like Gen. 2. 20, 'But for Adam there was not found an help meet.' Heb. *לֹא מֵצָא* one did not find. See Note on Gen. 16. 14. This current of authorities, which is countenanced by the Apostle's citing it also in the passive, strongly inclines us to regard this as the genuine sense of the original, although the main scope of the clause remains the same whichever construction be adopted. The Scriptural usage of the term *חֶשֶׁב* is primarily to think, purpose, intend, imagine, devise, as evil or mischief towards any one. Gen. 50. 20. Ps. 35. 4, 20.—41. 8. Jer. 11. 19. 2 Sam. 14. 13. And secondly, to reckon, esteem, account; to impute, to put to one's account, whether favourably or the reverse. Thus 2 Sam. 19. 20, 'Let not my lord im-

pute (*יִרְחֹשׁ*) iniquity unto me.' Pa. 32. 2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord *imputeth* (*יִרְחֹשׁ*) not iniquity.' Comp. Lev. 7. 18.—17. 4. Num. 18. 27. The expression before us becomes important from the use which is made of it by the Apostle Paul, Rom. 4, in establishing the doctrine of justification by faith; but as a full consideration of his reasoning on the subject would lead us into too wide a field of discussion we shall content ourselves with glancing at some of the leading aspects of the passage. The 'believing' which is here said to be counted to Abraham for righteousness is not to be understood of the *general* and *habitual* faith that governed his life and entitled him to the character of a truly pious man. It was the *particular act* of believing here spoken of which was so imputed. Nor is it to be supposed that Abraham now *first began* to believe savingly in God, for the Apostle assures us, Heb. 11. 8. 9, that it was by *faith* that he obeyed when called, long before this, to forsake his native country, and sojourn in a strange land; and so far as he then had true faith, he doubtless had justifying faith, or such a faith as availed to constitute him a pious man and an heir of salvation. In what sense, then, was his faith on this occasion peculiarly counted to him for righteousness? We answer, that it was counted to him, as in its own nature it truly was, as a righteous, that is, an acceptable, an excellent, a praiseworthy act. This we conceive to be, in this connection, the genuine import of *צְדָקָה* (Gr. *δικαιοσύνη*) translated *righteousness*, a term clearly used in a parallel sense in D. ut 24. 13, 'In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment and bless thee; and it shall be *righteousness* (*צְדָקָה*) unto thee before the Lord thy God;' i. e. a good, a meritorious deed, an act of piety. So in Gen. 18.

19, 'And they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do *justice* (צדקה) and judgment;' i. e. to do good or commendable deeds. Is. 64. 5, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh *righteousness* (צדק);' i. e. that doeth good. The interpretation of the term in this sense is strikingly confirmed by the parallel passage respecting the good deed of Phinehas in slaying the polluted Israelite and the Midianitish woman, Num. 25. 6, seq. and thus referred to by the Psalmist, Ps. 106. 30, 31, 'Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. *And that was counted unto him for righteousness* (והחשב לו לצדקה). Gr. και ελογισθη αυτω εις δικαιοσυνην). In this case, as in that of Abraham, it is clear that it was a *single act on a special occasion* that was so reputed to the doer. The conduct of each was so remarkable, so noble, so commendable in the sight of God, under the circumstances which gave rise to it, as to gain the particular, the marked approbation of Heaven, and to cause it to be distinguished by a corresponding emphasis of honourable testimony. This we conceive is what is meant by its being 'counted' in both cases 'for righteousness.' The expression does not merely indicate that it was so esteemed in the divine mind, or that God in his secret judgment accounted of it as a pre-eminently worthy and acceptable deed, but that he so ordered things that it should be remembered to their credit, that it should be made matter of public and lasting record, in a word, that it should stand as an honourable testimonial affixed to their characters with all succeeding generations. This is undoubtedly the true force of the expression as viewed in itself and apart from any peculiar bearings elsewhere given to it by the sacred writers. It is the primary and unforced sense which a native Jew would affix to the words in reading his own

Scriptures. And accordingly Philo the Jew, (de Abrahamo, p. 386, ed. Frankf.) in speaking of Abraham says, 'His praise has been recorded, being testified by the oracles which Moses delivered, by whom it is reported that he believed in God. And that this has been said of him is a great thing, but it is a far greater that it has been confirmed by acts.' But if such be the genuine purport of the language as used by Moses, the question very naturally occurs, whether the passage as quoted by Paul has the same meaning, or in other words whether Paul is to be considered as giving an infallible exposition of the exact mind of the Spirit in the present clause as it stands in the Mosaic original. To this it may be replied, that in as far as the Apostle is to be considered as introducing this passage with a view to illustrate the case of a sinner's justification on his first believing in Christ, the quotation cannot be deemed in point, because this was not the first instance of Abraham's believing, nor consequently of his being accounted righteous, nor is there any evidence that his faith, on this occasion, had a special respect to Christ as its grand object. It was a faith exercised upon a peculiar promise, viz. the promise of an innumerable seed. But the circumstances under which it was exercised rendered it something so signal and illustrious, so heroic and praiseworthy, that God was pleased to account it, and to have it accounted, as a singularly righteous act. But the Apostle's citation was in another respect strictly pertinent. The grand scope of his reasoning in the context is to show that according to the economy of grace a believing sinner may be placed in a state of acceptance with God simply by believing without the works, that is, the observances, of the Jewish law. This is clear from the case of Abraham. It is expressly recorded of him that righteousness was reckoned to him on the ground of his



8 And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9 And he said unto him, Take

q ch. 24. 13, 14. Judg. 6. 17, 37. 1 Sam. 14. 9, 10. 2 Kings 20. 8. Luke 1. 18.

faith, *before he was circumcised*, or in other words, before he came under the obligations of the ceremonial law. In like manner, the same favour may be extended to the gentile believer of every age and country who reposes trust in the gospel message. The example of Abraham is adduced, we conceive, merely by way of illustration, as affording an *analogous*, not an *identical*, case of strong and acceptable faith. It is not designed to intimate that *precisely the same object of faith* of which Paul is speaking, was before the mind of the patriarch on the occasion referred to, but the course of his argument is substantially this;—As Abraham, in the face of great discouragements and impediments, firmly believed God, and thereby is said to have had righteousness accounted to him, much more the believing sinner who in spite of all the obstacles in the way gives credence to the gospel promise, is counted and treated as righteous and gratuitously justified.

8. *Whereby shall I know, &c.* Abraham's interrogation here is not to be construed as a mark of the temporary failure of his faith, nor as implying that he himself needed an extraordinary confirmation of the divine promise; but for the sake of his posterity, who might be tempted, from the difficulties to be encountered, to despair of realizing the truth of the prediction, he desired some clear testimonial, which should have the effect of ratifying to their minds, like the seal of a covenant, the solemn engagement of the Most High. This request God was graciously pleased to grant, as it is expressly said, v. 18, that in that same

me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, in reference to which the symbolical transaction here related was ordered. Of this the memory would naturally be preserved and cherished among his descendants, as an infallible token of the fulfilment of the great promise. Should we be disposed to blame this inquiry, as savouring of vain curiosity or sinful distrust, let us bear in mind that the very same act may be good or evil, according to the principle from which it proceeds. Had the question arisen from unbelief, it would have been decidedly sinful. It would have resembled the question which Zacharias asked, Luke, 1. 18, when the angel told him from God he should have a child; 'Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my life well stricken in years,' for which unbelieving question he was immediately struck dumb. If, on the other hand, it expressed a wish to be informed more clearly respecting the divine purposes, or to receive those ample testimonies which God himself was willing to communicate, then it was perfectly innocent, and consistent with the strongest faith. It was for the purpose of instruction only that the blessed virgin inquired of the angel, Luke, 1. 34, how she should have a child, since she was a virgin. The question, in itself, did not materially differ from that of Zacharias; but the principle was different; and therefore the one received a gracious answer, the other a severe rebuke. Many instances are recorded where God has been graciously pleased to give signs to his people for the confirmation of their faith, when there was not any doubt

upon their minds respecting either his faithfulness or power. When he appeared to Gideon, Judg. 6. 14—21, and told him that he should deliver his country from the yoke of Midian, Gideon said, 'If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me;' in answer to which, God caused fire to come out of the rock, and consume the kid and cakes which Gideon had prepared for him; and presently afterwards, Judg. 6. 36—40, he gave him another sign, making the dew to fall alternately on the fleece and on the ground, while the other remained perfectly dry. In the same way he gave to Hezekiah a choice of signs, offering to make the shadows on the sun-dial go backward or forward ten degrees, according as he should desire, 2 Kings, 20. 8—11. From hence it appears that the inquiries which proceed from faith, are good and acceptable to God; and that Abraham's was of this nature is manifest; because his faith on this occasion was specially commended by God himself.

9. *Take me an heifer.* Heb. קחה לך *take for me*; i. e. take and offer unto me. Chal. 'Offer before me.' The idiom is Hebraic, paralleled by Gen. 48. 9, 'And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, *Bring them* (קחם *take them*), I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.' Ex. 25. 2, 'Speak unto the children of Israel, *that they bring me* (ויקחו לך *that take for me*) an offering.' So that which in Ps. 68. 18, is read, Thou hast *received* (לקחת *thou hast taken*) gifts for men; is expounded by the Apostle Eph. 4. 8. 'Thou hast *given* gifts unto men,' i. e. taken and given. The creatures here mentioned viz. the young of beeves, sheep, and goats, with turtle-doves, and young pigeons were the only ones which were afterwards appointed under the law for

sacrifice; a fact which very naturally leads us to the inference that the transaction here recorded had some symbolical allusion to that system of worship. True it is, there is no express mention in the present narrative of the animals and fowls being actually sacrificed, but from all the circumstances we can scarcely doubt that that was the case.—¶ *An heifer of three years old.* Heb. כשלושה literally a *trebled heifer*. The Gr. however renders it δαμαλιν τριετιζουσσαν a *three-yearling heifer*, while the Chal. has תלתא עגלרין a *triple heifer* or *three heifers*. The dominant idea of the original Heb. is that of *triplication*, without specifying in what respect. But Bochart and other commentators of high repute understand it in reference to *time*, i. e. as denoting a heifer of *three years old*, especially as the equivalent phrase Is. 15. 5. cannot well be otherwise explained; 'His fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, *an heifer of three years old* (עגלת שלשית).' It is true indeed that under the law these animals were generally offered when they were one year old, but these were no doubt required to be of the age of three years, because they were then full grown, in their most perfect state, and therefore most suitable to be made use of on the present extraordinary occasion. To which we may add, that there might have been some mystical import, designed to be conveyed to Abraham by this circumstance of the transaction, of which we are at present ignorant.—¶ *A young pigeon.* Heb. גוזל *guzal*. This term is indeed occasionally applied to the young of other birds than those of the dove kind, but its leading import is that of ring-doves or wood-pigeons. Accordingly the Gr. has here περιστεραν a *dove*, and the Chal. בר יונה *bar yonah, young dove*, which accords moreover with the law given Lev. 1. 14.

10 And he took unto him all these, and <sup>r</sup>divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one

<sup>r</sup> Jer. 34. 18. 19.

10. *And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, &c.* This very solemn form of ratifying a covenant is again particularly mentioned in Jer 24. 18. It consisted in cutting the throat of the victim, and pouring out its blood. The carcass was then divided, lengthwise, as nearly as possible into two equal parts, which being placed opposite to each other at a short distance, the covenanting parties approached at the opposite ends of the passage thus formed, and meeting in the middle took the customary oath. The practice was by no means peculiar to the Hebrews. Traces of it may be found in the Greek and Roman writers, and in the accounts of travellers. On the question of the time, scope, and object of this transaction symbolically considered, we defer our remarks to v. 17.—¶ *And laid each piece one against another.* Heb. *ויתן איש ראשו לראש* *gave every one's head or piece against his fellow*; i. e. head against head, shoulder against shoulder, leg against leg, and so of the other parts, with a considerable space between, through which the covenanting parties were to pass, v. 17.—¶ *But the birds divided he not.* The same thing was afterwards prescribed in the law, Lev. 1. 17, 'He shall cleave it (the bird) with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder.' Fowls were considered rather as mere appendages to the sacrifice, and their blood was not sprinkled upon the altar. Yet in the present instance it is probable that the birds, like the several parts of the animals, were laid whole even against each other.

11. *And when the fowls came down.*

Heb. *והעריט* *the fowl, collect. sing. for*

against another: but <sup>s</sup>the birds divided he not.

11 And when the fowls came

<sup>s</sup> Lev. 1. 17.

*fowls*, i. e. the ravenous birds of prey, as eagles, vultures, kites, &c. which feed upon dead bodies. As the slain and divided animals represent the nation of Israel, so these birds of prey were doubtless emblematic of the Egyptians and other enemies who should fall upon, rob, and afflict them with the utmost rapacity and cruelty. Thus in Ezek. 17. 3, 7, 12, the invading kings of Babylon and Egypt are compared to eagles; in Ezek. 39. 4, 17. Rev. 19. 17, 18, various hostile powers, under the emblem of ravenous birds, are summoned to feast upon the sacrifice of a devoted and slaughtered people. The Jerus. Targ. interprets the passage in the same sense, understanding it of the idolatrous monarchies which afflicted Israel.—¶ *Abram drove them away.* Heb. *ושב אחס* *puffed them away*; i. e. by swelling his cheeks with his breath and blowing at them. Ainsworth renders it 'huffed them away.' The expression seems to be employed with a view to denote the *ease* with which, under a protecting providence, the assaults of their enemies should be repulsed from the chosen people. Targ. Jon. 'And idolatrous people descended, who are likened to an unclean bird, in order to prey upon the riches of Israel; but the merit of Abraham protected them.' Though Abraham is here represented as the instrument, yet the effect is to be ascribed primarily to the tutelar agency of Omnipotence. Thus Ex. 15. 10, of the Egyptians, 'Thou didst *blow* with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.' Thus too Ezek. 21. 31, of the Ammonites, 'I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will *blow* against thee in the fire of

down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 And when the sun was

my wrath.' The following practical suggestion, though doubtless very remote from the primitive drift of the words, and resting moreover on the assumption that the present ceremony was a sacrifice, is yet drawn so naturally from the incidents that we scruple not to give it. 'Interruptions, we see, attended the father of the faithful in his most solemn approaches to God; and interruptions of a different kind attend believers in this. How often do intruding cares, like unclean birds, seize upon that time and those affections which are devoted to God! Happy is it for us, if by prayer and watchfulness, we can drive them away so as to worship him without distraction!' *Fuller.*

12. *And when the sun was going down.* Heb. לָבוֹא *to go in*; i. e. ready to set; the usual form of expression in the original.—¶ *A deep sleep fell upon Abraham.* Heb. תַּרְדֵּמָה *tardamah*. Gr. *εκατασις*, i. e. a supernatural trance or extacy. The Heb. term is the same with that employed respecting the deep sleep into which Adam was cast Gen. 2. 21, upon the creation of Eve.—¶ *An horror of great darkness fell upon him.* Taking the whole narrative together it would seem that the day was entirely dedicated by Abraham to God. His first vision was before daylight, while the stars were yet to be seen. In the morning he is ordered to provide, slay, and arrange the appointed victims, and in these preparations, which must naturally have required considerable time, it is probable the former part of the day was spent till noon or after. Having thus done what was enjoined, he was still required to wait and watch; wait till God should condescend to appear, and watch that the

going down, 'a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

t Gen. 2. 21. Job. 4. 13.

victims be not plundered nor polluted. Thus employed he continues till the going down of the sun, when his eyelids begin to grow heavy, being pressed down by a supernatural impulse. And now we may expect that God will answer him, as he had done before, by vision. But very different, in the circumstances at least, is the revelation now granted him from that which he had previously enjoyed. An horror of great darkness falls upon him, an effect akin to that overpowering influence both upon the mind and the body which we elsewhere learn was no unusual accompaniment of prophetic trances. Thus Dan. 10. 8, 'I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength.' Job. 3. 13, 14, 'In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on man, fear came upon me, and trembling which made all my bones to shake.' The visitations of the Almighty are always awful, even those of love and mercy, and no doubt the preternatural gloom now made to rest upon Abraham's spirit, was designed in part to impress him with a profound reverence of God, and to teach him that those that rejoice in him must still rejoice with trembling. But it cannot be questioned that there was yet a farther reach in the purpose of this extraordinary illapse upon the patriarch's mind. Every incident of the transaction appears to have been fraught with emblematic meaning, and this among the rest. The overwhelming darkness, and the accompanying mental emotions, were a striking image of profound distress and affliction, and from what follows in the ensuing verse,

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety <sup>u</sup> that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that*

<sup>u</sup> Ex. 12. 40. Ps. 105. 23. Acts 7. 6.

we are left in no doubt that such was indeed their real purport. By significant symbols he designed to give him a just conception of the manner in which the great end should be accomplished, and to indicate that it would be against much opposition, through many troubles, and after long delays. This calamitous scene of suffering was to be brought about mainly, though not exclusively, by the oppressive power of Egypt. From this indeed they were afterwards to be signally delivered and planted in the land of promise; but the darkness must precede the light; trial must pave the way for triumph. Egypt indeed is not named, for prophecy requires to be delivered with some degree of obscurity, or it might tend to defeat its own design; but the grand fact of a series of unparalleled sufferings is clearly disclosed, while it is left to time to develop the various related particulars. The Jerusalem Targum gives the symbol a somewhat more extended scope than most commentators; 'And as the sun was near to setting, a profound slumber seized upon Abraham, and behold four kingdoms stood up with ■ view to reduce his children into a state of bondage.' These kingdoms, as we elsewhere learn, were the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, of which great account is made, as persecuting powers, by the Jewish writers.

13. *Know of a surety, &c.* Heb. ידע תדע *knowing know*. This can be understood only as God's own interpretation of the sign which he had vouchsafed to Abraham in the incidents above recorded. He here explains to him the manner in which he is to understand the sign that was now grant-

ed in compliance with his request in v. 8.—¶ *Shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs.* The primary and principal reference here is to the land of Egypt, although from the language of Gen. 17. 8. Ps. 105. 9—12, it would seem that even the land of Canaan itself, which though theirs by promise, was not actually made over to them as a possession and inheritance till some generations afterwards, was also intended; and in the meantime was actually the scene of more or less persecution to the patriarchs, as is clear from Gen. 21. 9.—26. 7, 14, 15 et inf.

<sup>w</sup> Ex. 1. 11. Ps. 105. 25.

—¶ *And shall serve them.* Heb. יעבדום. It is far from clear that our translation has given the right view of this clause. It is altogether more natural to suppose the nominative here is the people of the land in which they were to be strangers, and that the pronoun 'them' in both cases refers to the seed of Abraham. The word עבדום therefore we take for *they shall serve themselves of them*. The Sept. has δουλωσουσιν αυτοις *they shall enslave them*; the Vulg. *subicient eos servituti, shall subject them to bondage*, and equivalently the Syr. Arab. and Targums; all confirming the sense which we propose.—¶ *They shall afflict them four hundred years.* It is not entirely clear from what date this period is to be reckoned. Ainsworth, with great probability, computes it from the time of Ishmael's mocking Isaac, Gen. 21. 9. Gal. 4. 29, which occurred thirty years after the promise recorded Gen. 12. 3. This promise was given 430 years before the giving of the law, Gal. 3. 17, and from Ex. 12. 41, it appears that their deliverance from bondage was also 430 years after that prom-



14 And also that nation whom they shall serve, <sup>x</sup> will I judge: and afterward <sup>y</sup> shall they come out with great substance.

15 And <sup>z</sup> thou shalt go <sup>a</sup> to thy

<sup>x</sup> Ex. 6. 6. Deut. 6. 22. <sup>y</sup> Ex. 12. 36. Ps. 105. 37. <sup>z</sup> Job 5. 26. <sup>a</sup> Acts 13. 36.

ise. The chronology may be stated thus :—

Abraham enters Canaan and receives the promise	B. C. 1921
Isaac mocked by Ishmael	1891
Israel departs from Egypt	1491

The difference between the first and last of these dates is just 430 years. Of this period 215 years were passed in sojourning in Canaan, and 215 in Egypt. —It may here be remarked that according to the Hebrew accents, which we believe to be as correct indices of the sense as the Hebrew vowel points, the middle clause of this verse 'and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them,' is to be considered as parenthetical, and we should therefore read it, 'Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, four hundred years.' The actual period of their service and affliction was much less.

14. *That nation whom they shall serve, will I judge.* That is, will punish by the infliction of such judgments as their sins deserve. These are particularly described Ex. ch. 7—11, and Ps. 78. 43—51.—27. 36. It goes to counterbalance the announcement of grievous suffering to be assured that the eye of God is continually upon the persecutors, and that he will in due time avenge the wrong done to his own glory in the affliction of his unoffending people.—¶ *They shall come out with great substance.* Heb. ברבש גדול, that is, great riches, both of their own and of the Egyptians, whose 'jewels of silver and gold, and garments,' they carried away, Ex. 12. 35, 36. So also

fathers in peace; <sup>b</sup> thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But <sup>c</sup> in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity <sup>d</sup> of the Amorites <sup>e</sup> is not yet full.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 25. 8. <sup>c</sup> Ex. 12. 40. <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 21. 26. <sup>e</sup> Dan. 8. 23. Matt. 23. 32. 1 Thess. 2. 16.

Ps. 105. 37, 'He brought them forth with silver and gold.' The promise of blessings to the church often comes in very close connection with the threatening of judgments to its oppressors.

15. *Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace.* Shalt die a peaceful death. The consolation hitherto imparted to Abraham was of such a nature as to pertain in common to him and his seed; but here the divine discourse is directed to the patriarch in person for his own individual comfort. It could not but relieve the saddening influence of the above declarations to be assured, that his old age should be happy, and his end should be peace. Though he might not be favoured in his life-time with the actual possession of Canaan, his promised inheritance, yet he should not be wanting in the grounds of solid hope and joy in view of his departure to the world of spirits. With such an assurance from such a source, he will be content to forego the privilege of seeing all the promises fulfilled. ¶ *Thou shalt be buried in a good old age.* Heb. בשירבה טובה in a good hoary-age.

16. *In the fourth generation they shall come hither again.* Or Heb. דור רביעי ישובו הנה the fourth generation shall return hither; but the present rendering 'in the fourth,' may be admitted, and in that case the phrase is probably to be understood as denoting the fourth age or century, equivalent to the 400 years in v. 13. It is remarkable, however, that the land of promise was actually entered upon and inherited by the fourth generation of the Israelites who went down into

17 And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking fur-

nace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

f Jer. 34. 19, 19.

Egypt, as Caleb was the fourth from Judah, and Moses the fourth from Levi, and so doubtless of many others.—

¶ *For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* Heb. *האמורי* the Amorite, collect. sing. Abraham was now indeed living among the Amorites, which made it natural that that people should be specified rather than any other; but the term properly includes all the other nations of Canaan whose iniquities had marked them out for destruction. The whole of these nations are seldom enumerated together; one or more usually standing for all. Instead of 'is not yet full,' a more correct version is probably, 'is not till then full.' It is evident from this that there is a certain measure of wickedness beyond which God will not spare a guilty people. See Note on Gen. 6. 3.

17. *Behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.* Heb. *תנור עשן* lit. an oven of smoke, or smoking oven. Our language does not perhaps afford a more intrinsically suitable word by which to render the original *תנור tannoor* than 'furnace;' and yet it is certain that a degree of ambiguity attaches to it in this connection which has led to a very general misapprehension of the real scope of this part of the vision. The phrase here employed has been almost universally considered as parallel to the expression Deut. 4. 20, 'The Lord hath taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt' (comp. Jer. 11. 4), and the drift of the symbol has been understood to be nothing more nor less than to point to that well-known scene of the afflictions of Israel, while the 'burning lamp' has been regarded as an emblem of their joyful deliverance thence. But the fact is, the Hebrew has two dis-

inct words promiscuously rendered 'furnace,' in our common translation; and from this circumstance has arisen a confusion in the use of the term which can only be dispelled by a clear exhibition of the respective meanings of each. One of these words—that occurring here—is *תנור tannoor*, which properly signifies that kind of cylindrical and portable oven, used by the orientals for baking and other culinary purposes. This is an earthen vessel about three feet high, smeared outside and inside with clay, and placed upon a frame or support. Fire is made within it and when the sides are sufficiently heated, thin layers of dough are spread on the inside, and the top covered, when the process of baking is very quickly completed. This word occurs fifteen times in the Hebrew Bible, and in every instance refers to this kind of oven, and is indeed rendered 'oven' in our translation in all of them except the present and three other passages, viz. Neh. 3. 11.—12. 38. Is. 31. 9. The other term is *כור kor*, of which 'furnace' is the legitimate signification, i. e. a place for melting, assaying, and refining metals. Thus Ezek. 22. 18—22, *כור סריגים* is a place for refining silver, and *כור זהב* Prov. 17. 3, is a place for refining gold. In like manner the *כור ברזל iron furnace*, mentioned in Deut. 4. 20, and from which the Israelites are said to have been brought out, is properly a furnace for melting iron. It is this latter word which is employed wherever a people are said metaphorically to be cast into a furnace as Ezek. 22. 18—22, or delivered out of one, as Deut. 4. 20. 1 Kings, 8. 51. Jer. 11. 4. It occurs nine times, and is uniformly rendered 'furnace.' From this view of the usage

of the two words in the original it is clear that they are not literally applied to designate the same things, nor is the present phrase 'smoking furnace' intended to convey precisely the same idea with the phrase 'furnace of iron' in Deuteronomy. The latter undoubtedly refers to Egypt as a scene of affliction and bondage; but that the former has any such allusion is not to be gathered from the import of the term itself, nor is it in fact consistent with the decorum of the imagery. The smoking furnace is described as passing between the parts of the slaughtered animals; but this was an action appropriate to one of the covenanting parties, and to him alone, or to his representative symbol: and with what propriety such an act could be attributed to the symbol of persecuting Egypt, which was no party in the transaction, we are utterly at a loss to conceive. Yet that the object seen in the vision had a mystical import of some kind is beyond question, and this we know no other mode of determining than by comparing the figurative use of the term in other places. But here our resources are scanty, for there are not more than two or three passages in which any thing beyond the literal sense of the term, can be detected. Of these the principal are the following; Is. 31. 9, 'And he (the Assyrian) shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, *whose fire is in Zion and his furnace* (תַּנּוּר *tannoor*) *in Jerusalem.*' As this is a denunciation of wrath to the enemies of Israel, the natural purport of the passage seems to be, that as the divine presence dwelt in Jerusalem, this was the seat and source from whence the judgments of Jehovah should issue against his adversaries. With this it may be well to compare the following equivalent passages, Is. 30. 33, speaking of the same hostile power, the Assyrians, 'For Tophet is ordained of old;

yea for the king is it prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the wrath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.' Again, Is. 33. 10—14, when his own degenerate people are more particularly the subject of the threatening, 'Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath as fire, shall devour you. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire:—The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' In the great scarcity of wood for fuel throughout the East, the *tannoor* or oven is usually heated with stubble or chaff, and the rebellious Israelites are here represented as alarmed at the idea of being cast into the oven of divine wrath which their own sins have furnished the fuel, the chaff and the stubble, for heating. John the Baptist utters a clearly parallel intimation, Matt. 3. 12, 'He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' The 'unquenchable fire' in this passage answers plainly to the 'everlasting burnings' in that of the Old Testament prophet, and has moreover a direct reference to the words of Malachi, ch. 4. 1, where the coming of John the Baptist is announced as the forerunner of the great Messenger of the Covenant; 'For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven' (תַּנּוּר *tannoor*); and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.' So also Ps. 21. 8, 9, 'Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall

find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a *fiery oven* (תנור *tannoor*) in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in the time of his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.' From all this we cannot avoid the conclusion that the 'smoking oven' is a designed symbol of the divine presence viewed more especially in its *vindictive* aspect; and in the passage before us, instead of regarding it as pointing to the afflictions endured by Abraham's seed in Egypt, we rather look upon it as mystically shadowing forth the divine judgments visited upon Egypt. As far as it has relation to that persecuting power, it represents it rather as the *subject* than the *agent* of suffering. Nothing is more common with the sacred writers than to represent the Deity in his avenging dispensations under the emblem of a consuming fire, and in this connection it will be proper to bear in mind that in Sinai he appeared in mingled fire and smoke, in circumstances of grandeur and terror, of which the object seen in the vision of the patriarch was perhaps but a miniature adumbration; Ex. 19. 18, 'And mount Sinai was altogether in a *smoke*, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the *smoke* thereof ascended as the *smoke of a furnace*.' So also when he manifested his wrath at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is said ch. 19. 28, that Abraham in looking toward the burning cities 'beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the *smoke of a furnace*.' Add to this, that the standing symbol of Jehovah's presence in the wilderness was the pillar of cloud (or smoke) by day and of fire by night, and that on several occasions the temple is said to have been filled with the *smoke* of his glory, 1 Kings, 8. 10, 11. Is. 6. 4. Rev. 15. 8, and we can scarcely fail to perceive that the object here exhibited to Abraham was a designed and appropriate symbol of the Most High, as

the covenant and avenging God of his seed, and that he now appeared in this symbol in order to convey to him a pre-intimation of the *peculiar manner* in which his indwelling in the midst of his posterity should be manifested. The 'burning lamp' is probably to be considered merely as an equivalent symbol, introduced in order more vividly to depict to the mind's eye of the patriarch the character of that visible manifestation by which the divine glory and majesty was to be displayed under the economy afterwards to be established among the chosen people. This is confirmed by a reference to the solemn rites witnessed at Sinai, where among other circumstances of the sublime and awful scene it is said Ex. 20, 18, that 'all the people saw the thunderings, and the *lightnings* (Heb. לַפְדִּים *lappidim*, lamps), and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking.' The mention of 'lamps' in connection with the divine appearances is by no means infrequent, as may be seen by turning to Ezek. 1. 13. Dan. 10. 6. Rev. 1. 14. It has indeed been usual with commentators, especially on the ground of Is. 62. 1, to consider the 'burning lamp' in this place as an emblem of *deliverance*, but as it is represented as passing between the parts of the victim, which was the act of a covenanting, this sense seems to be somewhat remote from the main scope of the vision, and therefore improbable. On the whole, we conceive the grand drift of this symbolical transaction to be, to disclose to Abraham the leading fortunes of his seed through a long lapse of ages not only their bondage and afflictions in Egypt, but their subsequent establishment in the land of Canaan, the scene of the vision, as a nation of sacrificers, among whom the distinguishing symbols of the divine presence were to be fixed as their glory and their defence. Thus viewed the incidents here recorded assume a significancy and an interest of

18 In that same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, <sup>a</sup>Unto thy seed have I

<sup>g</sup> ch. 24. 7. <sup>h</sup> ch. 12. 7. & 13. 15. & 26. 4. Ex. 23. 31. Numb. 34. 3. Deut. 1. 7. & 11. 24. & 34. 4. Josh. 1. 4. 1 Kings, 4. 21. 2 Chron. 9. 26. Neh. 9. 8. Ps. 105. 11. Isai. 27. 12.

which they are effectually deprived by the common more limited application of them.

18. *In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, &c.* Heb.

**כרת ברית** *cut a covenant*; in allusion to the ceremonies above described. From what follows it would seem that these words contain more than a mere exposition of the drift of the preceding rites. Those rites indeed had reference to a covenant; they were designedly subservient to one; yet of the verbal stipulations of that covenant nothing thus far has been said. That part of the transaction is now related. It is spoken of apart from the foregoing, probably because it took place subsequent to the incidents there mentioned. The action of the furnace and lamp in passing between the pieces was performed as it were in pantomime or dumb show, while Abraham was entranced in a vision. But the *actual* engagement into which God was pleased to come with his servant was of too much moment, of too high an import, to be made with him in any other than a waking state. Abraham accordingly is released from his state of vision, and God thus proceeds to bind himself by covenant to make over, as by a solemn deed of gift, the whole land in which he then was, the boundaries and the present occupants of which are specified with great accuracy and minuteness. Though called a 'covenant,' yet it was mainly a stipulation on the part of God only; for which reason it probably was, that in the previous vision his symbol only passed between the parts of the animals, while nothing of this kind is affirmed of Abraham.

given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

At the same time, it is probably to be understood, though not expressly affirmed, that Abraham became so far a party to the covenant as to promise under the most solemn sanctions a general course of obedience to all the divine requirements.—¶ *Unto thy seed have I given.* Gr. *δωσω* *I will give*, on which the Jewish doctors very pertinently remark, 'He saith not 'I will give,' but 'I have given;' and yet Abraham had now begotten no children. But because the *word* of the holy blessed God is a *deed*, therefore he thus speaketh.'—¶ *From the river of Egypt.* Heb. **נַהַר מִצְרַיִם**. Commentators are in great doubt as to the identity of this river. At first view it would unquestionably seem that the Nile is intended, as that river is clearly in several places indicated by this phrase. But as it does not appear that the jurisdiction of the Israelites ever actually extended to the Nile, Wells, Clark, and others incline to the opinion that it denotes an inconsiderable river or brook falling into the Mediterranean at a small distance south of Gaza. This is supposed to be the same stream which is called by Joshua, ch. 15. 47, the 'Sihor,' corresponding to the supposed situation of which Dr. Richardson crossed the dry bed of a river, thirty yards wide, called the 'Wadi Gaza.' But we still think the former is the true interpretation. For (1.) a brook or small stream is never called in Hebrew, as here, **נַהַר** *nahar*, but **נַחַל** *nahhal*. (2.) In Josh. 13. 3, the destined boundary of the land of Israel on the south is said indeed to be the Sihor, which is before Egypt, but in Is. 23. 3. and Jer. 2. 18, mention is made



20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,  
 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

of the same stream under the denomination of נַחַל *yeor, river*, which is the appropriated name of the Nile, as is known to every reader of the Hebrew Scriptures, it being but in a single instance (Dan. 12. 5—7) applied to another stream. Indeed Wilkinson remarks that נַחַל *yeor, river*, is merely the Hebrew form of the Egyptian word JARO *river*, applied to the Nile. (Dom. Man. of Anc. Egypt. vol. I. p. 12, note.) It is no valid objection to this that the Israelites never extended their borders quite to the banks of the Nile; for (3.) It is doubtless the object of the divine speaker merely to designate in a loose and general way the two great rivers as the extreme limits within which the territory of the Israelites was to be included, though it might fall somewhat short of these limits on either side. In like manner in Is. 27. 12 and Jer. 2. 18, the Euphrates and the Nile are undoubtedly opposed to each other as the extreme boundaries of the possessions of the Hebrews. Moreover (4) in the time of David and Solomon all, or nearly all, the kings between these rivers were tributaries of the Israelitish kings. 2 Chron. 9. 26. 2 Sam. 8. 3. From the combined weight of the above reasons we feel little hesitation in assigning the Nile as the stream here intended by the 'river of Egypt.' As to the fulfilment of the promise respecting the actual occupancy of this extended region, see Note on Josh. 1. 4.

19—21. *Kenites—Kenizzites—Kadmonites, &c.* So little is known of most of these nations or clans, that it will be sufficient to refer to the maps and Marg. Ref. for all that is important

## CHAPTER XVI.

NOW Sarai, Abram's wife,  
<sup>a</sup> bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, <sup>b</sup>an Egyptian, whose name was <sup>c</sup>Hagar.

a ch. 15. 2, 3. b ch. 21. 9. c Gal. 4. 24.

in their situation and history. Out of the ten here mentioned only seven were actually subjugated, Deut. 7. 1. It is hence, with great probability inferred that the redundant three had, by the time of the actual conquest, become either extinct or blended with other tribes, or had changed their names.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1. *Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children.* Abraham had now dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and notwithstanding his advanced age appears to have discovered no impatience for the fulfilment of the promise. It was now put beyond a doubt that he should become a father; but it had not yet been explicitly declared that Sarah should become a mother. We may suppose therefore that her feelings as a wife gave force to her concern about her husband's glory and happiness, and prompted the weak and carnal expedient which is here described, and to which Abraham himself undoubtedly lent too ready an ear. Seeing at her time of life but little hope of seed in the ordinary way, she seems deliberately to have concluded, that if the promise were to be fulfilled it must be in the person of another. Accordingly, as unbelief is very prolific of schemes, she here proposes a measure evidently fraught with the most pernicious consequences. It implied a culpable distrust of God who had promised, and went to introduce a foreign, perhaps an idolatrous mother into the family of Abraham. It was a most unwise and inconsiderate tampering with her husband's affections, and it laid a foundation of probable, if

2 <sup>d</sup> And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD <sup>e</sup> hath restrained me from bearing: I pray

thee <sup>f</sup> go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram <sup>g</sup> hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

d ch. 30. 3. e ch. 20. 18. & 30. 2. 1 Sam. 1. 5, 6.

f ch. 30. 3, 9. g ch. 3. 17.

not of certain domestic jealousies and quarrels. In a word, it was a direct doing of evil in the vain expectation that good might come. But let us consider the particulars.—¶ *She had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.* A bond-woman, a female slave, in opposition to a free woman, Jer. 34. 10, 11. Gal. 4. 22, who according to the usages of those times might be disposed of by her mistress Sarah as she chose, v. 6. She probably came into Abraham's family during his sojourn in Egypt, and may have been one of the 'maid-servants' presented by Pharaoh to the patriarch, Gen. 12. 20. Her name '*Hagar*' *flight*, or a *fugitive*, we think with Michaelis was not bestowed by her parents—for why should an Egyptian child be called by a Hebrew name?—but was one that accrued to her in process of time from the leading event in her history here recorded. Multitudes of similar instances, as we have before remarked, occur in the sacred narrative. Her descendants were called '*Hagarites*' or '*Hagarenes*,' 1 Chron. 5. 10, rendered by the Gr. *παροικους* *strangers*. From her, by Ishmael, the Saracens and Arabs were descended, and the word '*Hegira*' applied to the *flight* of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina, comes from the same root, as does also '*Mohagerin*' or '*Mohajerin*,' *fellow-flyers*, the name given by the false prophet to the *companions of his flight*. She is said to have been handmaid or servant to Sarah, and not to Abraham, from its being customary in those patriarchal times, for the male and female departments of a family to be kept in a great measure distinct; and Hagar probably stood

in the same relation to Sarah, that Eliezer did to Abraham. Thus likewise Rachel and Leah, the daughters of Laban, had their respective handmaids, or female head-servants, Gen. 30. 3. In such cases the relation between the mistress and her servant was so intimate, that the children of the latter by the master were reckoned as those of the mistress, as appears not only from the present instance, but also in the parallel case of Rachel, Gen. 30. 3, 6, 8. So afterwards under the law, the children of the bond-servant were accounted the children of the master, Ex. 21. 4.

2. *Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing.* The acknowledgment conveyed in these words is almost the only redeeming feature of Sarah's conduct on this occasion. She owns God's providence in her childless condition, Ps. 127. 3, and yet well nigh destroys the virtue of this confession by making the fact a plea for contriving some other means for the fulfilment of the promise! 'What a lively pattern do I see in Abraham and Sarah, of a strong faith and weak; of strong in Abraham, and weak in Sarah! She, to make God good of his word to Abraham, knowing her own barrenness, substitutes a Hagar; and, in an ambition of seed, persuades to polygamy. Abraham had never looked to obtain the promise by any other than a barren womb, if his own wife had not importuned him to take another. When our own apparent means fail, weak faith is put to the shifts, and projects strange devices of her own, to attain her end: she will rather conceive by another womb, than be childless: when she hears of an impossibility to

3 And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram<sup>h</sup> had dwelt ten

h ch. 12. 5.

nature, she doubteth, and yet hides her diffidence; and, when she must believe, feareth, because she did distrust. Abraham hears and believes, and expects and rejoices; he saith not, I am old and weak; Sarah is old and barren; where are 'he many nations that shall come forth from these withered loins? It is enough to him that God hath said it: he sees not the means, he sees the promise: he knew that God would rather raise him up seed from the very stones that he trod on, than himself should want a large and happy issue.' *Bp. Hall.*—¶ *I pray thee go in unto my maid.* That is, marry her, as is clear from the ensuing verse, on which see note.—¶ *I may obtain children by her.* Heb. אֲבִנָּה *may be builded by her.* 'The ideal connection between the rearing of offspring and 'building' is very close in the original Scriptures. The Heb. בֶּן *ben, a son,* is a derivative from בָּנָה *banah, to build,* and אֶבֶן *eben, a stone,* of which houses are built, probably comes from the same root. The following passages, among others, will exhibit the Scriptural usage in this respect. Deut. 25. 9, 'So shall it be done unto that man that will not *build up his brother's house*;' i. e. who will not raise up seed to his brother. Ruth 4. 11, 'The Lord make the woman like Rachel and like Leah, which two did *build the house of Israel*;' i. e. were the founders of the nation of Israel. Ex. 1. 21, 'And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he *made them houses*;' i. e. he gave them children, an extended posterity. Ps. 68. 6, 'God setteth the solitary *in families*;' Heb. 'in houses;' i. e. makes them progenitors. Ps. 49. 11, 'Their inward thought is

years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

that their *houses* shall continue for ever; i. e. that their stock or race shall be interminably perpetuated. Ps. 113. 9, 'He maketh the barren woman to *keep house*;' i. e. as the ensuing exegetical clause explains it, 'to be a joyful *mother of children.*'—¶ *And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.* That is, obeyed; a very common sense of the word. Thus Prov. 1. 33, 'Whoso *hearkeneth* unto me shall dwell safely;' i. e. whoso obeyeth me. Ps. 81. 13, 'O that my people had *hearkened* unto me;' i. e. had obeyed my precepts. Rev. 1. 3, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that *hear* the words of this prophecy;' i. e. they that give obedient heed to what is written. The period of Abraham's previous sojourning in Canaan is stated in the next verse with a view, perhaps, of displaying still more impressively his infirmity on this occasion. He who had for ten long years sojourned as a stranger and a pilgrim in the land of promise, and that wholly from a principle of faith, he, alas! is at length so far overcome as to yield to the carnal expedient proposed by his wife. 'The father of mankind sinned by hearkening to his wife, and now the father of the faithful follows his example. How necessary for those who stand in the nearest relations, to take heed of being snares, instead of helps, to one another!' *Fuller.* Abraham was now 85 and Sarah 75 years of age.

3. *Gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.* That is, a secondary wife, or one of an inferior grade. Such wives, though contrary to the primeval institution of marriage, were customary in the patriarchal and subsequent ages, and are generally in the scriptures called 'concubines.' 'The

4 ¶ And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said unto Abram,

12 Sam. 6. 16. Prov. 30. 21, 23.

Hebrew word *pilgash*, here translated 'wife,' is frequently in other places rendered 'concubine.' It describes a wife of a second and inferior class. Such women were considered real wives, inasmuch as the connection was legal and customary; but the absence of certain solemnities and contracts of dowry marked the condition as inferior, though not in itself degrading. The children did not inherit the property of the father; who usually provided for them in his own life-time, if he had sons by the principal wife or wives to claim the inheritance. We thus find Abraham providing for the sons of his concubines Hagar and Keturah. Things are still much the same in the East, where similar practices are legalized by the Mohammedan law. That law allows a man four wives of the first class, and does not restrict him as to slaves. But the condition of a slave is not altered as such by the manner in which she lives in the family of her master. The sweeper of his house and the partner of his bed are alike liable to be sold again if they have been purchased; but delicacy prevents this right from being often exercised. (See Malcolm's 'History of Persia.') So we see that Hagar remained a 'bondwoman' after she had become the mother of Ishmael, and Sarai is still called her mistress.

*Pict. Bible.*

4. *When she saw that she had conceived, &c.* The consequence was what might have been anticipated. The young woman, elated with the honour done her, becomes vain and insolent. She views Abraham's vast possessions, and vaster prospects, as entailed upon

My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom: and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee.

k ch. 31. 53. 1 Sam. 24. 12.

her posterity, and as a natural result her mistress is despised in her eyes, thus showing herself to be one of the three things by which the earth is disquieted, Prov. 30. 23, viz. 'an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.'

5. *And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee, &c.* Heb. חמסי עליך *my wrong is (lieth) upon thee*; i. e. thou art to blame in suffering her insolence; the duty of redressing the wrong which I sustain rests with thee; or she may mean to say, My injury is thine also. Those who are the first to give evil counsel are often the first to suffer by it. This was strikingly exemplified in the case of Sarah. Being now made to reap according to that she had sown, she begins, when it is too late, to repent of her rashness. But instead of condemning her own conduct, and confessing that her folly had recoiled upon herself, she turns the edge of her resentment against her husband. Had the good man formed a deliberate design of injuring and insulting her, she could not have employed harsher language. Indeed her conduct throughout was that of a peevish, unreasonable, and disappointed woman; and its weakness and wickedness are aggravated by her appealing to God in a case where she was clearly and consciously in the wrong. As if she had taken it for granted that her husband would not hear her, she exclaims, 'The Lord judge between me and thee!' Such hasty and passionate appeals to heaven, instead of indicating a good cause, are commonly the marks of a bad one. A truly serious spirit will pause before interposing the

6 <sup>1</sup> But Abram said unto Sarai, <sup>m</sup> Behold, thy maid *is* in thine hand; to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 15. 1. <sup>1</sup> Pet. 3. 7. m. Job. 2. 6. Ps. 106. 41, 42. Jer. 38. 5.

name of God on any occasion, and will shudder at the thought of employing it on a false or frivolous one. 'I will sooner believe a plain unprofessing man, in his simple words, than ten thousand common swearers, under the sanction of as many oaths.' *Hunter.*

6. *Behold, thy maid is in thine hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee.* Heb. *הטוב בעיניך* *that which is good in thine eyes.* Abraham on this vexing occasion is meek and gentle. He had learned that a soft answer turneth away wrath, and therefore refrained from upbraiding his wife, as he might easily and reasonably have done; preferring domestic peace to the vindication of himself and the placing the blame where it ought to have laid. It is doubtful, however, whether he did not yield too much in this case; for though according to the custom of those times Hagar was mainly under the control of Sarah, yet being his lawful wife, she was entitled to protection, and should not have been given up to the will of one who manifested, on this occasion, nothing but jealousy, passion, and caprice. But he seems to have been brought into a situation where he was at a loss what to do; and thus, as Sarah is punished for tempting him, so he also is punished with a disordered house for having yielded to the temptation.—*¶ Sarai dealt hardly with her.* Heb. *תענה* *afflicted her*; probably by some kind of personal maltreatment, as the expression in the original is too strong not to imply something more than mere verbal reproaches. The more the incidents are considered, the more

hardly with her, <sup>n</sup> she fled from her face.

7 *¶ And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, ° by the fountain in the way to P Shur.*

n Exod. 2. 15. ° ch. 25. 18. p Exod. 15. 22.

strikingly do they show into what disorder and turmoil one ill-advised measure may plunge a happy well-regulated family. Abraham's ill-judged compliance with the rash counsel of his wife has created an unpleasant state of feeling between him and her; it constrains him to connive at her cruel treatment of an unhappy woman, who is at least as much to be pitied as blamed; and renders the prospect of the promised seed a heavy affliction instead of a blessing. Sarah is betrayed by the eagerness of her spirit first into a culpable expedient; then into unkindness and undutifulness towards her lord; then into irreverence and impiety towards God; and finally, by an easy transition, into barbarity towards the hapless handmaid whom her own scheme had brought into a condition that claimed her utmost compassion and kindness. In what deep and accumulated woe, then, may one inconsiderate step involve the heedless! And if good and well-intentioned people suffer thus severely from one act of imprudence, who but must tremble to think of the fearful consequences of deliberate wickedness! A thousand volumes written against polygamy would not lead to a clearer fuller conviction of the evils of that practice, than the story under review.

7. *The angel of the Lord found her, &c.* We here see how seasonably and suitably God interposes to rectify the disorders occasioned by the infirmities of his servants. When we have wearied ourselves with our own devices, and snared ourselves in the works of our own hands, Providence often takes



8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she

said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

up the case, subdues it to his own wise and gracious purposes, and turns evil into good. Hagar flies from the face of her unkind mistress, but happily for her she cannot flee from God. The interest which Abraham now has in her gives her an interest in the peculiar care and protection of the Almighty—and how kindly this is manifested the sequel will disclose. An 'angel' is here mentioned for the first time. The word itself is properly a name of *office*, and not of *nature*; signifying *messenger or legate, one sent or employed upon any business whatever, whether human or divine*. The 'angels' mentioned in the sacred volume were sometimes men, as Haggai, Hag. 1. 13, is called 'the Lord's messenger,' Heb. 'angel of the Lord,' as is also John the Baptist, Mal. 3. 1. Mat. 11. 10. The appellation is given generally to the *ministering servants* of God, to prophets and holy men acting under divine direction, or in the service of religion. It is also extended in several instances to providential dispensations or to the impersonal agents of the divine will, as plagues, pestilences, famines, &c. A remarkable and prominent usage of the term is to designate him who is here and elsewhere denominated the 'angel of Jehovah,' a title which is evidently appropriated to an uncreated being. More frequently, however, the term is applied to a superior order of beings, of whom our Saviour says, 'They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.' From the silence of the Scriptures respecting the creation of these spiritual intelligences, and from the remarkable language of the following passages, some have inferred that the whole angelic order was in fact composed of the spirits of glorified

men. Rev. 22. 8, 'And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me those things. Then said he unto me; See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book.' Again, Rev. 21. 17, 'And he measured the wall thereof according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel,' or rather, 'of an angel,' as the article does not occur in the original. In some cases the word is evidently a designation of Christ, who is 'the angel of the covenant,' Mal. 3. 1; the 'angel of God's presence,' Is. 63. 9; and 'the angel in whom the name of the Lord is,' Ex. 23. 20. As the angel here mentioned is called by Hagar 'Lord' (Heb. Jehovah), v. 13, and as he addresses her in a style befitting only the Most High, v. 10, promising to perform what God alone could do, and foretelling what God alone could know, the inference would seem to be inevitable, that it was no other than a divine personage who is here presented to our view.—¶ *In the way to Shur*. 'It appears that the term 'wilderness,' or 'desert of Shur,' here and elsewhere denotes the sandy tract to the west of Stony Arabia, extending 150 road miles between Palestine and Egypt, and having the Mediterranean on the north, and the peninsula of Sinai on the south. The common caravan road between Palestine and Egypt still lies through the heart of this desert. It is evident that it was Hagar's intention to return to her own country.' *Pict. Bible*.

8. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou, &c. That she should thus hear her name familiarly called, and her occupation specified, by an entire stranger, would naturally

9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and <sup>a</sup>submit thyself under her hands.

† Tit. 2. 9. 1. Pet. 2. 18.

excite her wonder, and beget the impression that it was more than a human being who addressed her. Of this she certainly became entirely convinced in the course of the interview. In calling her *Sarah's maid* instead of *Abram's wife*, he seems to have aimed tacitly at lowering the self-complacency which had procured her troubles, and to lead her mind back to that humble character which she had formerly sustained. The questions put to her were close, but tender, and such as were fitly addressed to a person fleeing from trouble. The first might be answered, and was answered; but with respect to the last she is silent. 'We know our present grievances, and so can tell 'whence we came,' much better than our future lot, or 'whither we go.' In many cases, if the truth were spoken, the answer would be, from bad to worse.' Fuller.

9. *Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands.* Heb. *התעני* *afflict thyself*, or *suffer thyself to be afflicted*; the same which occurs v. 6, and is thus rendered 'dealt hardly with.' The idea of something like penance is undoubtedly implied. It is the term usually applied to the act of self-abasement by which a penitent sinner humbles himself with prayer, and fasting, and confessions of guilt before his Maker. The Gr. renders it by *ταπεινωθητι* *be thou humbled*, and in allusion to this expression, the Apostle says, 1 Pet. 5. 6, '*Humble yourselves* (*ταπεινωθητε*) therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may lift you up.' The injunction of the angel to Hagar here was to return and submit. The reason was that she had done wrong

10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

† ch. 17. 20. & 21. 18. & 25. 12.

in despising her mistress, and by her exposure in endangering the fruit of her womb, and now she must be humbled for it. Hard as this might appear, it was the counsel of wisdom and mercy. A connection with the people of God, with all their faults, is preferable to the best of this world, where God is unknown. If we have done wrong, whatever temptations or provocations we have met with, the only way to peace and happiness is to retrace our footsteps, in repentance and submission. As to the fact of her return, the history leaves us to draw our own conclusions. We may safely suppose that all parties were by this time brought sufficiently to themselves to afford her ample encouragement to return. The solitude and dangers of the wilderness, and the apparition of the angel, awful, though in mercy, would of course greatly have diminished in Hagar's mind the resentment occasioned by her mistress's treatment. With Sarah, on the other hand, the sudden disappearing of her maid; the loss of her services; the just apprehension of the evil which might have befallen a desperate woman in her delicate situation; regret for her cruel behaviour; together with the soothing effect of time and serious reflection, would no doubt tend to moderate and mollify her spirit, and dispose her to welcome back the returning fugitive. While Abraham, always wise, gentle, and good, would necessarily rejoice in the restored peace of his family, accompanied as it was with a fresh demonstration of the divine tenderness towards him and his, and with a farther enlargement and extent of the promised blessing.

11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, \* and shall call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

s ch. 17. 19. Matt. 1. 21. Luke 1. 13, 31.

10. *I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, &c.* Heb. הרבה הרבה *multi-  
plying I will multiply.* The angel-  
speaker here adopts a style suited only  
to the Deity, and for Hagar's encour-  
agement gives her grounds to expect a  
portion of Abraham's blessing, of which  
she must often have heard, viz. a nu-  
merous offspring. This was the promp-  
ting of divine benignity, for it is clear  
that the language of absolute authori-  
ty might have been used without any  
intermingling of gracious promises;  
but God delights rather to *win* than to  
*compel* the hearts of his people into the  
ways of obedience. A parallel promise  
occurs ch. 17. 20, 'And as for Ishmael,  
I have heard thee: Behold, I have  
blessed him and will make him fruitful,  
and will multiply him exceedingly:  
twelve princes shall he beget, and I  
will make him a great nation;' on  
which we may here take occasion to  
reimark, that the usual idiom of the  
Scriptures requires us to understand in  
both passages what is said of Ishmael  
personally to be true also of his de-  
scendants. Indeed it is rather his pos-  
terity than himself that is primarily in-  
tended. When it is said, 'I will mul-  
tiply him exceedingly,' the word 'him'  
is obviously meant his posterity, for no  
one can imagine that he himself was  
meant to be literally multiplied in vir-  
tue of this promise. So likewise in the  
subsequent clause 'I will make him a  
great nation,' it is evident that one man  
cannot be a nation; and therefore Ish-  
mael throughout this whole prediction  
must be viewed as the representative of  
his posterity. What is declared of him

12 'And he will be a wild man;  
his hand *will be* against every  
man, and every man's hand  
against him; \* and he shall dwell  
in the presence of all his breth-  
ren.

t ch. 21. 20. u ch. 25. 18.

and promised to him, was intended to  
be affirmed of his descendants and ful-  
filled in them.

11. *Shalt bear.* Heb. יולדת *yoladtht*;  
a very peculiar word, being composed  
of two tenses implying time present  
and future, and equivalent to, 'thou  
shalt very shortly bear.' So Judg. 13.  
8, where the Heb. phrase for 'child that  
shall be born' presents the same signi-  
ficant anomaly in point of grammar.  
—¶ *Shall call his name Ishmael.*  
Heb. ישמעאל *yishmael*, *God will hear*,  
or, as immediately interpreted, *God  
hath heard*, i. e. hath heard, pitied, and  
relieved, thine affliction; which is well  
rendered by the Gr. 'Hath given heed  
to thy tribulation.' Chal. 'Hath re-  
ceived thy prayer. Targ. Jon. 'Thine  
affliction is revealed before the Lord'  
This is the first instance of a name  
given by divine direction before birth,  
though many such instances occur here-  
after, as we shall have occasion to  
observe. It is remarkable that God is  
not said to have heard her *prayer*, for  
it does not appear that she had yet call-  
ed upon his name. She merely sat  
bewailing herself, as not knowing what  
to do. Yet lo, the ear of mercy is open  
to what we may term the silent voice  
of affliction itself. The groans of the  
prisoner are heard of God, not only  
theirs who cry unto him, but, in many  
cases, theirs who do not. See a paral-  
lel case, Gen. 21. 17, with the accom-  
panying note.

12. *He will be a wild man.* Heb.  
פרא אדם *a wild-ass man.* Gr. ἀγρο-  
τακος ἀνθρωπος *a wild man.* Chal. 'Wild  
ass among men,' i. e. rude, fierce, un

cultivated, and impatient of the restraints of civilized life. As remarked in v. 10, the predicted character and fortunes of Ishmael are here identified with those of his posterity. The 'wild man' here mentioned was to be multiplied into a great nation, and if so it must necessarily be into a great nation of 'wild men;' and we have only to turn to the page of history to see how apposite this character has been in all ages to the Arab race, the descendants of Ishmael. In allusion to the term here employed it is said of unregenerate men, Job, 11. 12, 'For vain man would be wise, though man be born *like the wild ass's colt*.' On the contrary of renewed and sanctified men, it is said, Ezek. 36. 38, 'The waste cities shall be filled with *flocks of men*.' Heb. 'with sheep-men,' i. e. men whose natures are tamed and softened, made gentle and lamb-like. Again, Hos. 13. 15, 'He (Ephraim) hath *run wild* (Heb. hath *assified* himself) amidst the braying monsters.' Sir Rob. Ker Porter (Trav. vol. I. p. 459) thus describes one of this species of animals which he met in the mountains of Persia:—'He appeared to me to be about ten or twelve hands high; the skin smooth like a deer's, and of a reddish colour; the belly and hinder parts partaking of a silvery gray; his neck was finer than that of a common ass, being longer, and bending like a stag's, and his legs beautifully slender; the head and ears seemed long in proportion in the gracefulness of their forms, and by them I first recognised that the object of my chase was of the ass tribe. The mane was short and black, as also was a tuft which terminated his tail. The prodigious swiftness and peculiar manner with which he fled across the plain, reminded me of the striking portrait of the animal drawn by the author of the book of Job. I was informed by the meharmandar that he had observed them often in the possession of the Arabs, who

told him the creature was perfectly untameable.' The passage of Job to which the author refers is ch. 39. 5—8, 'Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.' By the use of so unusual a phrase in reference to the future seed of Hagar, it was obviously intended to indicate an analogy between the wildness of Ishmael and his descendants, and that of the wild ass (*onager*); and it is equally curious and surprising to observe how minutely the description in Job applies to the free, wandering, lawless, pastoral, marauding Bedouins, the descent of whose tribes from Ishmael is admitted by the learned, and gloried in by themselves. The manners and customs of these Arab tribes, except in the article of religion, have suffered almost no change during the long period of three thousand years. 'They have occupied the same country, and followed the same mode of life, from the days of their great ancestor, down to the present times, and range the wide extent of burning sands which separate them from all surrounding nations, as rude, and savage, and untractable as the wild ass himself. Claiming the barren plains of Arabia, as the patrimonial domain assigned by God to the founder of their nation, they considered themselves entitled to seize, and appropriate to their own use, whatever they can find there. Impatient of restraint and jealous of their liberty, they form no connection with the neighbouring states; they admit of little or no friendly intercourse, but live in a state of continual hostility with the rest of the world. The tent is their dwelling, and the circular camp their city; the spontaneous produce of the

soil, to which they sometimes add a little patch of corn, furnishes them with means of subsistence, amply sufficient for their moderate desires; and the liberty of ranging at pleasure their interminable wilds, fully compensates in their opinion for the want of all other accommodations. Mounted on their favourite horses, they scour the waste in search of plunder, with a velocity surpassed only by the wild ass. They levy contributions on every person that happens to fall in their way; and frequently rob their own countrymen, with as little ceremony as they do a stranger or an enemy; their hand is still against every man, and every man's hand against them. But they do not always confine their predatory excursions to the desert. When booty is scarce at home, they make incursions into the territories of their neighbours, and having robbed the solitary traveller, or plundered the caravan, immediately retire into the deserts far beyond the reach of their pursuers. Their character, drawn by the pen of inspiration Job, 24. 5, exactly corresponds with this view of their dispositions and conduct: 'Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.' Savage and stubborn as the wild ass which inhabits the same wilderness, they go forth on the horse or the dromedary with inconceivable swiftness in quest of their prey. Initiated in the trade of a robber from their earliest years, they know no other employment; they choose it as the business of their life, and prosecute it with unwearied activity. They start before the dawn, to invade the village or the caravan; make their attack with desperate courage, and surprising rapidity; and, plunging instantly into the desert, escape from the vengeance of their enemies. Provoked by their continual insults, the nations of ancient and modern times

have often invaded their country with powerful armies, determined to extirpate, or at least to subdue them to their yoke; but they always return baffled and disappointed. The savage freebooters, disdaining every idea of submission, with invincible patience and resolution, maintained their independence; and they have transmitted it unimpaired to the present times. In spite of all their enemies can do to restrain them, they continue to dwell in the presence of all their brethren, and to assert their right to insult and plunder every one they meet with on the borders, or within the limits of their domains.' *Paxton*. To the same purpose the editor of the *Pict. Bible* on this passage remarks:—'Even in the ordinary sense of the epithet 'wild,' there is no people to whom it can be applied with more propriety than to the Arabs, whether used in reference to their character, modes of life, or place of habitation. We have seen something of Arabs and their life, and always felt the word *wild* to be precisely that by which we should choose to characterize them. Their chosen dwelling-place is the inhospitable desert, which offers no attractions to any other eyes but theirs, but which is all the dearer to them for that very desolation, inasmuch as it secures to them that independence and unfettered liberty of action which constitutes the charm of their existence, and which render the minute boundaries and demarcations of settled districts, and the restraints and limitations of towns and cities, perfectly hateful in their sight. The simplicity of their tented habitations, their dress, and their diet, which forms so perfect a picture of primitive usages as described by the Sacred Writers, we can also characterize by no more fitting epithet than 'wild;' and that epithet claims a still more definite application when we come to examine their continual wanderings with their flocks and herds,



their constant readiness for action, and their frequent predatory and aggressive excursions against strangers or against each other.' But this point resolves itself into the ensuing clause.—¶ *His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.* It is evident that one man could not subsist alone in open enmity with all the world, nor could one man's hand be literally against every man's. There is, moreover, not the slightest hint in Scripture, nor any reason to believe that Ishmael lived personally in a state of opposition to his brethren. Bearing in mind what we have already said respecting the *collective* import of the name Ishmael in this prediction, we can have no difficulty in understanding this as a declaration, that his posterity should exist in an attitude of perpetual hostility with the rest of mankind. And there is certainly no people to whom this applies with greater truth than to the Arabs; for there is none of whom aggression on all the world is so remarkably characteristic. 'Plunder in fact forms their principal occupation, and takes the chief place in their thoughts; and their aggressions upon settled districts, upon travellers, and even upon other tribes of their own people, are undertaken and prosecuted with a feeling that they have a right to what they seek, and therefore without the least sense of guilt or degradation. Indeed the character of a successful and enterprising robber invests a Bedouin with as high a distinction in his own eyes and in the eyes of his people, as the most daring and chivalrous acts could win among the nations of Europe. The operation of this principle would alone suffice to verify the prediction of the text. But besides this, causes of variance are continually arising between the different tribes. Burckhardt assures us that there are few tribes which are ever in a state of perfect peace with all their neighbours, and adds, that he

could not recollect this to be the case with any one among the numerous tribes with which he was acquainted. Such wars, however, are seldom of long duration; peace is easily made, but broken again upon the slightest pretence.' *Pict. Bible.*—¶ *He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* Heb. על פני כל אחיו *shall dwell before, or over against, the faces of his brethren.* The original word for *dwell* (שכן *shakan*) properly signifies to *dwell in tents, or to tabernacle*, whence a portion of the Arab tribes are denominated *Scenites, tent-dwellers*, answering to the modern Bedouins, in opposition to those who inhabit cities. The meaning undoubtedly is, that he i. e. his descendants, shall pitch his tents near to and in sight of his brethren, and shall maintain his independence in spite of all attempts to conquer or dispossess him. There is some doubt as to the latitude in which the term 'brethren' is here to be understood; some taking it in a more restricted sense for the other descendants of Abraham, viz. the Israelites, Midianites, Edomites, &c. while others, as all mankind are brethren in a larger sense, consider it as equivalent to saying that the race of Ishmael should still subsist, notwithstanding the universal enmity of all nations, as an independent people in the face of the whole world. From the general tenor of Scriptural usage, we think the former the most probable interpretation. It is unquestionable, as an historical fact, that they have ever been mainly surrounded by the above nations, or their posterity, and nothing is more notorious than that they have never been effectually subdued. Although continually annoying the adjacent countries with their robberies and incursions, yet all attempts made to extirpate them have been abortive; and even to this day travellers are forced to go armed, and in caravans or large companies, and to march and

13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said,

Have I also here looked after him \* that seeth me?

x ch. 31. 42.

keep watch like a little army, to defend themselves from the assaults of these roving freebooters of the desert. These robberies they justify, according to Mr. Sale (Prelim. Dissert. to the Koran) by alleging the hard usage of their father Ishmael; who being turned out of doors by Abraham had the open plains and deserts given him by God for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there. On this account they think they may, with a safe conscience, indemnify themselves, as well as they can, not only on the posterity of Isaac, but on every one else; and in relating their adventures of this kind, deem themselves warranted, instead of saying, 'I robbed a man of such a thing,' to say 'I gained it.' Indeed from a view of the character and history of this remarkable people during a period of 4000 years, as compared with this prediction, we may say with Dr. A. Clarke, that 'it furnishes an absolute demonstrative argument of the divine origin of the Pentateuch. To attempt its refutation, in the sight of reason and common sense, would convict of most ridiculous presumption and excessive folly.'

13. *She called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me.* Heb. **אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי רֹאֶה** *thou (art) the God of vision, or rather of visibility*; i. e. the God that sufferest thyself to be seen. The Gr. indeed renders differently; **ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιδῶν με** *thou art the God that seeth me*, i. e. who careth for me, who pondereth and pitieth my afflictions; a sense which the original word for *see* often bears in the Scriptures, as Ex. 3. 7. Ps. 9. 14.—25. 18. This rendering, after the example of the Lat. Vulgate, has been followed by our translation. But there is little doubt

that the Heb. word **רֹאֶה** *roi* rendered 'thou seest' is really an abstract noun of the form of **עָנִי** *oni*, *affliction*, **אֲנִי** *ani*, *ship*, &c. signifying here as elsewhere *vision or the subject of vision*. Thus, 1. Sam. 16. 12, 'Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and *goodly to look to* (Heb. **טוֹב רֹאֶה** *good or fair of visage or sight*). Job, 33. 21, 'His flesh is consumed away *that it cannot be seen* (Heb. **מֵרֹאֶה** *from sight, from visibility*). Comp. Job, 7. 8. The purport of her words is undoubtedly that of a grateful recognition of the fact, that God had condescended, in the person of the Angel to make himself graciously visible in the hour of her extremity.—¶ *Have I also looked after him that seeth me.* Or Heb. **הֲאֵפֶת אַחֲרַי רֹאֶה** *have I looked upon the back parts of my seer, beholder*. Although the letters of the original **רֹאֶה** are the same as in the preceding clause, yet the vowel-pointing is different, so as to give the sense not of *seeing* in the abstract, but of a *seer* in the concrete. Again, the other important word in the clause **אַחֲרַי** rendered *after* is the same as that applied to the view of the divine glory which Moses enjoyed in the cleft of the rock, Ex. 33. 23. After the full brightness of the Shekinah had passed by, the prophet saw the mitigated or shaded glories of the Godhead, the 'back-part,' as it were, of the sacred vision. It is not unlikely that a similar import is to be affixed to the word here; yet there is such a vast variety in the renderings of the ancient versions, that nothing positive can be affirmed respecting it. We have suggested that which seems to us most probable. If this be not satisfactory to the reader, he is left at liberty to exercise his choice among the fol-

14 Wherefore the well was called <sup>y</sup> Beer-lahai-roi; behold, *it is* <sup>z</sup> between Kadesh and Bered.

15 ¶ And <sup>a</sup> Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his

<sup>y</sup> ch. 24. 62. & 25. 11. <sup>z</sup> Numb. 13. 26. <sup>a</sup> Gal. 4. 22.

lowing variety of versions. Gr. 'For I have openly seen him that appeared unto me.' Chal. 'Lo, I begin to see after that he appeared unto me.' Syr. 'Lo, I have beheld a vision, after he beheld me.' Arab. Erp. 'Even here I have seen, after his seeing me.' Arab. Saad. 'Truly I have here seen thy compassion, after I had seen affliction.' Targ. Jon. 'Behold, here is revealed the glory of the divine majesty after the vision.' In several of them it will be observed that the leading idea is that of devout wonder on the part of Hagar, that she had been permitted to live to see any thing else, after being favoured with such a glorious vision; and this is strikingly in accordance with the general belief prevalent in those early days, that such a view would be followed by the immediate extinction of life. See Ex. 24. 11. Judg. 13. 32. But whether this were the real sense of the words we are not prepared to decide.

14. *The well was called.* Heb. קרא *he called*, i. e. one called, every one called; this became its general appellation. This impersonal kind of phrase in which the active is used for the passive voice, is very common both in the Heb. of the Old Testament and the Gr. of the New. Thus, Ex. 10. 21, 'Even darkness which may be felt.' Heb. 'which one may feel.' Ps. 9. 6, 'And his name shall be called.' Heb. 'one shall call his name.' Luke 12. 20, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.' Gr. 'they shall require.' 1 Cor. 15. 27, 'But when he saith, all things are put under him;' i. e. when it is said, &c.—<sup>y</sup> Beer-lahai-roi. Heb. באר להאי ראי *the*

son's name, which Hagar bare, <sup>b</sup> Ishmael.

16 And Abram *was* fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

<sup>b</sup> ver. 11.

*well of the living one, my seer.* Chal. 'the well of the angel of life, who appeared there.' According to this rendering of Onkelos, the active sense of *life-giving* or *quickenings*, in allusion to her wondrous *preservation*, is involved in the epithet <sup>y</sup> living here employed, and this perhaps is not far from the truth.

15. *Abram called his son's name—* *Ishmael.* Having previously heard from Hagar the various particulars of the divine apparition above recited. He named his son 'according to the prophecy that went before upon him.'

16. *Abram was fourscore and six years old.* Heb. 'Son of eighty-six years;' according to the usual idiom of the original. For this long period had Abraham lived childless, and yet as a trial to his faith, he is required to wait fourteen years longer before the sight of the child of promise gladdens his aged eyes. During thirteen years of that period it would seem that all those delightful personal manifestations of the Almighty which he had hitherto enjoyed were suspended: but whether this was designed, as some have suggested, as a token of the divine displeasure for so easily acquiescing in the sinful expedient proposed by Sarah, or whether it is simply to be referred to the sovereign good pleasure of him who giveth not account of any of his matters, it is not for us to say. It is certain however as a general fact that similar conduct is productive of similar results, and that if we find that it is not with us as in times past, that communion with God is more than usually difficult, that our intercourse

## CHAPTER XVII.

AND when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD <sup>a</sup> appeared to Abram, and said

a ch. 12. 1.

with heaven is sadly impeded, our prayers hindered and our praises deadened, the cause is to be sought in ourselves. It is not a mere *sovereign* withdrawal of the light of God's countenance, but a merited rebuke of some secret offence, some unrestrained temper, some unholy compliance, some unchecked and unchastened desire, which is suffered to remain undetected in the heart and to rob us of the promised blessing.—A single additional remark may close our exposition of the present chapter. We are here impressively taught that we are not to judge of the greatness and importance of the designs of providence, by any worldly marks of distinction. The posterity of Ishmael, though later predicted, was earlier brought forward, and has been much longer established, and existed in a far higher degree of national dignity and consequence, than the posterity of Isaac. Yet it was not in the line of Ishmael, but in that of Isaac that the promises of life and salvation were to run. To Isaac, and not to his elder brother, pertained 'the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises,' and of him 'as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever.' The things which are highly esteemed among men, are often of no price in the sight of Him who hath chosen the foolish, the weak, and the base things of the world to confound the wise, the mighty, and the magnificent.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1. When Abram was ninety years old and nine. Heb. 'the son of nine-

unto him, <sup>b</sup> I am the Almighty God; <sup>c</sup> walk before me, and be thou <sup>d</sup> perfect.

b ch. 28. 3. & 35. 11. Ex. 6. 3. Deut. 10. 17. c ch. 5. 22. & 48. 15. 1 Kings. 2. 4. & 8. 25. 2 Kings 20. 3. d ch. 6. 9. Deut. 18. 13. Job. 2. 1. Mat. 5. 48.

ty-nine years,' i. e. going on in his ninety-ninth year. This was thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael. From the effect produced on Abraham's mind by the annunciation, v. 15—17, that he should yet have a son by Sarah, it is probable that he had long settled down in the belief that Ishmael was the destined seed, and consequently had renounced all hopes of farther issue.—**I am the Almighty God.** Heb. **אֵל שַׁדַּי** *El Shaddai, God all-sufficient*; able to accomplish with infinite ease all his purposes, whether of judgment or of mercy. This was a truth which he needed to have re-impressed upon his mind. It was for want of considering this, that he had had recourse to crooked devices in order to accomplish the promise. In view therefore of the physical impotency of Abraham's body and of Sarah's womb, the Most High is pleased to announce himself under this august title, which evidently carried with it the implication that no obstacles whatever could stand in the way of the complete fulfilment of the word of promise.

—**Walk before me.** Heb. **הִתְהַלֵּךְ** *set thyself to walk*; a peculiarly emphatic mode of expression. See Note on Gen. 13. 17.—**Be thou perfect.** Heb. **תָּמִיד** *perfect*, i. e. upright, sincere. Gr. 'Walk pleasingly before me and be blameless.' Chal. 'Serve before me and be perfect.' See notes on Gen. 5. 25. & 6. 9. Integrity is true scriptural perfection; and without that every thing in our religion is defective, and all profession vain. We may not indeed attain to *absolute* perfection on earth, but we should study as nearly as possible to approach it, which is only to be done by 'walking

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and  
' will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram 'fell on his

e ch. 12. 2. & 13. 16. & 22. 17. f ver. 17.

with God,' by a steady course of prayer and communion with him. Difficulties, to try our faith, may daily occur, and irksome and unpleasant duties will frequently present themselves, but we must walk on, pursue the even tenor of our way, and not turn aside to avoid the one or evade the other. It is probable that the admonition in this case is to be considered as involving a virtual reproof. It was as if he had said, 'Have recourse to no more unbelieving expedients; keep thou the path of uprightness, and leave me to fulfil my promise in the time and manner that seem good to me.' What a lesson is here afforded us against a resort to unlawful or doubtful means under the pretence of their being better calculated to promote the cause of God! Our concern is simply to walk before him in uprightness of heart and cleanness of hands, leaving it to him to bring to pass his own designs in his own way.

2. *I will make my covenant between me and thee.* Heb. אֶתְּנָה will give, i. e. will fix, appoint, confirm; as we have before explained the term, Gen. 1. 29. It is not of course the annunciation of a new purpose, but simply the renewal, the confirmation, of one of long standing. It is in fact the fifth declaration or utterance of the same gracious design of making Abraham the father of an innumerable seed. The words, however, in this connection probably have reference more particularly to the establishment of that external sign or token of the covenant which the writer goes on to describe in the ensuing verses, and which is afterwards expressly called a covenant, v. 10.

3. *Abram fell on his face.* 'The

face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

g Rom. 4. 11, 12, 16.

posture assumed by Abraham on this occasion probably resembles one of the several postures used by the Moham-medans in their worship. It consists in placing the body on the hands and knees—or on all fours, as we should say—while the head is bent down, the forehead touching the ground. This posture is highly expressive of the deepest humility and the most profound adoration. It also resembles the *kotora* usually performed before the emperor of China; and which is so well known to us in consequence of the refusal of Lords Macartney and Amherst to submit to it.' *Pict. Bible.*

4. *Thou shalt be a father of many nations.* Heb. לְאָב הַרְבֵּי גוֹיִם for or to a father of a multitude of nations. This promise was fulfilled both in a literal and a spiritual sense. In the former, not to mention the many tribes which sprang from his children by Keturah, Arabia, Idumea, and Canaan were peopled by the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael. But from the language of Paul, Rom. 4. 16, 17, it is evident that a far higher sense is to be assigned to this promise; that it is to be understood not merely of Abraham's natural posterity, but of his spiritual seed also, composed of all true believers of every age and country. They, by the exercise of genuine faith, become heirs of the righteousness of faith, and all its accompanying blessings, and so are rendered adoptively the children of Abraham, the father of the faithful. The promise therefore went to make him the father of the church of God in all future ages, or, as the Apostle calls him, 'the heir of the world.' Accordingly for all that the Christian world enjoys or ev-



5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but <sup>h</sup> thy name shall be Abraham; <sup>i</sup> for a father of many nations have I made thee.

<sup>h</sup> Neh. 9. 7. <sup>i</sup> Rom. 4. 17.

er will enjoy, it is indebted instrumentally to Abraham and his seed. The high honour then of being the stock from which the Messiah should spring, and on which the church of God should grow, is here conferred upon Abraham. It was this honour that Esau despised when he sold his birthright; and here lay the *profundeness* of that act, which involved a contempt of the most sacred of all objects, the Messiah and his everlasting kingdom.

5. *Thy name shall be called Abraham.* The change is greater in sense than in sound. 'Abram' (אַבְרָם), the former name, is composed of אב *ab*, father, and רם *ram*, high or eminent. 'Abraham' (אַבְרָהָם) is formed by dropping the last letter of the last member, and inserting the first syllable, of הַמֶּלֶךְ *hamon*, multitude. The constituent elements of the name, therefore, are אַבְרָם *Abram-hamon*, high father of a multitude, which for convenience' sake is abbreviated to אַבְרָהָם *Abraham*. It is proper however to observe that Jerome and some few others suppose the latter name to be formed simply by the insertion of the letter ה *h*, one of the letters of 'Jehovah,' into the former. But the mass of critics adopt the formation given above. This change of names, of which Abraham's is the first on record, imported some kind of change in the relative state of the subject, with a renewal or increase of the tokens of the Divine favour towards him. Accordingly the name of 'Jacob' was changed to that of 'Israel' from the circumstance related Gen. 32. 28. The name of 'Cephas' also was authoritatively exchanged for that of

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make <sup>k</sup> nations of thee; and <sup>l</sup> kings shall come out of thee.

<sup>k</sup> ch. 35. 11. <sup>l</sup> ver. 16. ch. 35. 11. Matt. 1. 6, &c.

'Peter,' Matt. 16. 18, and 'Saul' for 'Paul,' Acts, 13. 9. In like manner the promise to all true believers is, Is. 62. 2, 'Thou shalt be called by a *new name*, which the Lord thy God shall name.' Again, Rev. 3. 12, 'He that overcometh, I will write upon him my *new name*.' Isaac's name was not changed, because it was given him by God himself before he was born. In allusion to this promise the Apostle says, Rom. 4. 17, 'God calleth those things which be not as though they were,' i. e. he called or denominated Abraham *the father of a multitude*, because he should finally become so, though now he had but one child, and he not the child of promise. The custom of changing names still obtains in the East. 'In Persia, frequent examples of this kind occur. One of the most striking is that of the Persian king Shah Solyman, whose reign commenced in 1667 under his proper name of Suffee. But its first years being marked by public and private calamities, he was persuaded that there was a fatality in the name he bore, and that a change of it was necessary to turn the tide of misfortune. He accordingly assumed, with great solemnity, the name of Solyman. He was crowned anew under that name, and all the seals and coins which bore that of Suffee were broken, as if one king had died and another succeeded. Chardin, who was present, has given a particular account of this coronation. The constant change of name by the popes on their election, is perhaps quite as good an illustration.' *Pict. Bible*.—וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ אֶתְּתִיךָ *have I given thee*; i. e. put, ap-

7 And I will <sup>m</sup> establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; <sup>n</sup>to be a God unto thee, and to <sup>o</sup> thy seed after thee.

<sup>m</sup> Gal. 3. 17. <sup>n</sup> ch. 26. 24. & 28. 13. Heb. 11. 16. <sup>o</sup> Rom. 9. 8.

pointed, constituted; as explained on Gen. 1. 29. Gr. *τεθεικα*, Rom. 4. 17.

6. *Kings shall come out of thee.* This has been most signally fulfilled. No one in any age can be compared with Abraham, as far as relates to his numerous progeny of kings. From him were descended the chiefs of the twelve tribes of the Hebrews, and after their separation, the kings of Judah, as well as the kings of Israel. From him sprang the ancient monarchs of Edom, and the Saracen kings in Arabia, Babylon, and Egypt, trace back their origin to him. If we pass from the literal to the spiritual fulfilment of the prediction, we find the heavenly Messiah, the king of kings, descending from the same stock, and not only so, but all true Christians, his seed by faith, made 'kings and priests unto God,' Rev. 1. 6.

7. *For an everlasting covenant.* Heb. ברית עולם *covenant of eternity.* The phrases 'everlasting,' 'to eternity,' 'forever,' &c. it is well known are often to be taken in a limited sense, implying not an absolutely eternal, but an *indefinite* duration. Here, however, although the outward sign and administration of the covenant were to be temporary, circumcision being afterwards superseded by baptism, Col. 2. 11, 12, yet the covenant itself, in its spiritual import, is rightly termed by the Apostle, Heb. 13. 20 'everlasting covenant,' as it secures everlasting blessings to all those that by faith become interested in it.—¶ *To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.* The highest expression by which the communication

8 And <sup>p</sup>I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land <sup>q</sup>wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and <sup>r</sup>I will be their God.

<sup>p</sup> ch. 12. 7. & 13. 15. Ps. 105. 9, 11. <sup>q</sup> ch. 23. 4. & 28. 4. <sup>r</sup> Ex. 6. 7. Lev. 26. 12. Deut. 4. 37. & 14. 2. & 26. 18. & 29. 13.

of good to creatures can be set forth. All the privileges of the covenant of mercy, its richest joys and most glorious hopes, are summed up in this assurance. He that comes within its scope, as does every believer, can desire nothing more to make him happy. It is as if he had said, 'Whatever I am or have, or purpose in a way of grace to do, all that will I be to thee and to thy seed; all that shall be employed for thy protection, consolation, and salvation.'

8. *I will give unto thee—the land wherein thou art a stranger.* Heb. ארץ מגורך *land of thy sojournings, or peregrinations;* not of thy permanent abode; the land in which thou hast not a settled but a migratory kind of residence.—¶ *For an everlasting possession.* Here again the original word עולם *olam, everlasting,* is to be understood in the restricted sense explained above, although no *precise limitation* is assigned to it. Indeed it may be admitted, that as their enjoyment of the promised blessings of the covenant depended on their observance of its conditions, had they continued in a course of devout obedience, they might have been in possession of their earthly inheritance at the present day. But they forfeited the blessing by failing to comply with their stipulated engagements, and the consequence has been, that they are now scattered to the four winds of heaven. Yet there are many who contend that this covenant grant secured to the seed of Abraham the right of a *perpetual inheritance* of the land

9 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations.

10 This is my covenant, which

of Canaan, and that in virtue of this they are to be restored and reinstated in their ancient possession, and to flourish with more than their pristine glory. It is only in this way, they affirm, that the splendid predictions respecting the later fortunes of Israel are to be fulfilled. But until the great principles of prophetic interpretation are more definitely settled than they are at present, we cannot but deem this a very hazardous theory to maintain, and one which has a bearing far from favourable upon the conversion of the Jews.

9. *Thou shalt keep my covenant.* To keep a covenant is faithfully to perform the conditions imposed upon the covenanting parties. The grand condition in the present case was the observance of the rite of circumcision, which God goes on to specify and enjoin in a more particular manner in the ensuing verse.

10. *This is my covenant,* &c. i. e. the sign of my covenant, as explained v. 11. From this phraseology the usage arose of denominating a sacramental sign by the name of the sacrament itself. Thus, Ex. 12. 11, 'Ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover;' i. e. the sign of the passover. Luke 22. 19, 20, 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood;' i. e. the sign of the New Testament, Mat. 26. 17, 'Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?' i. e. the lamb, the sign of the passover. Here the covenant, properly so called, is couched in the preceding words, 'I will be a God unto thee,' &c.—¶ *Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.* Heb. יִמּוֹל yimmol, shall be cut round about; i. e. there shall be an excision of the prepuce or foreskin of the flesh of all males. We have

ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; \* Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.

8 Acts 7. 8.

here the first mention of an institution which, however revolting to European or American feelings, is held in such veneration to this day by no less than 150 millions of the earth's population, that they look down with the utmost contempt and execration upon every male uncircumcised. As to the origin of the rite, whether it had existed in the world prior to this command, it is a point which has occasioned much controversy among the learned. Herodotus speaks of it, as a custom ancient even in his time, and which existed among several nations, particularly the Egyptians and Ethiopians. This has led some to suppose that the practice was adopted from the Egyptians; but it is to be borne in mind that Moses lived more than a thousand years before Herodotus, and from his account it is certain that the ancestors of the Israelites were already circumcised, when they went down into Egypt, and did not therefore first adopt the practice during their continuance in that country. The presumption is rather that the Egyptians borrowed the rite from the Israelites, perhaps from the belief that the remarkable fecundity of the Hebrew race, as mentioned Ex. 1. 7, 12, was in some way dependent upon it, or connected with it. There are, moreover, other considerations which make it highly probable that the custom was utterly unknown to the Egyptians prior to the sojourning of the Israelites among them, (1.) It was twenty years after Abraham's return from that country before God enjoined upon him the rite of circumcision, and then, we are told, he administered the rite upon every male in his house, v. 23. Now it is certain

that when he came out of Egypt he brought with him a numerous train of men-servants and maid-servants; and therefore unless we suppose that all these Egyptian men-servants died within twenty years, or that when they died none of them left any male issue behind them, we can scarcely doubt that circumcision was not known in Egypt in Abraham's time; for it is expressly said that 'every male among the men of Abraham's house was circumcised,' at the same time that he himself was, which could never have been the case had they undergone the operation before. (2.) The conduct and expressions of Pharaoh's daughter upon finding the infant Moses in the ark go to establish the same point. Ex. 2. 6, 'And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and behold the babe wept (Heb. and behold, a male-child weeping). And she had compassion on him, and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.' It is plain that she noted the sex of the child, and the inference is fair, if not inevitable, that she knew him to be a Hebrew child by the sign of circumcision—a mark which distinguished the Hebrew from the Egyptian children. (3.) The language of the inspired writer, Ezek. 31. 18, would seem to imply that, although the practice may have obtained, as Michaelis contends, to some extent among the priests, yet that it was so far from being universal, that it could not even be deemed a general characteristic of the nation;—'Thou shalt lie in the midst of the *uncircumcised*, with them that be slain by the sword: this is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God.' But waiving the farther discussion of this point, or rather taking it for granted that the custom was now expressly ordained of Heaven, it is a matter of more importance to determine the grand ends which the divine Institutor had in view in establishing it. It may be viewed under the twofold aspect of a *SIGN* and a

SEAL. (1.) Its first and most obvious design was to serve as a *sign* of the covenant into which the posterity of Abraham were, in the person of their father, to enter; or in other words, to fix upon the persons of all his natural descendants a distinguishing mark, separating them from the rest of the world and denoting their peculiar relation to the true God. The wisdom of such a badge will be evident at once when it is remembered, that God had promised to multiply the seed of Abraham to an innumerable multitude. This promise it is true, he might have verified even though he had suffered them to be mingled promiscuously with the other nations of the earth. But in order to afford a visible attestation to his veracity it was necessary that they should be distinguished by some mark of peculiarity, and for this purpose, as we shall soon see, nothing could be more suitable than the rite here prescribed. But such an end, it is obvious, could not have been answered, had the practice at this time generally prevailed among other nations; for in that case its *distinctive* character would have been lost. We can see then with how much propriety this rite is afterwards v. 11, termed the '*token* of the covenant.' But this was not all. It served also to Abraham and his seed, (2.) As a memorial of their engagements. When they submitted to this ordinance, whether it were in infancy or at an adult age, they were no longer to consider themselves their own, or at their own disposal, but as dedicated to the service of their God. As Paul in reference to the scars and bruises which his body had received in the service of his Lord, said, 'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus,' so might the same language with propriety be used by every Jew in reference to this sacred memorial; for having in his own person the appointed sign of his relation to God, he must be continually re-

mind 'whose he was, and whom he was bound to serve.' (3.) Another reason for the adoption of this painful rite was its adaptedness to represent certain spiritual truths intimately connected with the great scope of the covenant. The Scriptures very frequently hold forth some of the most important moral doctrines under metaphors drawn from the practice of circumcision. Thus the mortification of sin is spoken of as the 'putting off the whole body of sin;' 'the crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts;' 'the putting off the old man, and putting on the new;' are all of them expressions exactly coinciding with the chief intent of this ordinance, showing that we bring a corrupt nature into the world with us which it must be the great labour of our lives to put away. But there are also other expressions of Scripture which show that this rite imported the highest degree of sanctification and holiness. Moses repeatedly speaks of the 'circumcising of the heart to love the Lord with all our heart and all our soul,' Deut. 10. 16.—30. 6. And the prophet Jeremiah's language is singularly emphatic, Jer. 4. 4, 'Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it.' From all this it is clear that the ordinance was figurative and designed to instruct the Lord's people in the nature and extent of their duties towards him. (4.) From the reasonings of Paul in the epistle to the Romans, ch. 4. 9—13, we learn a still higher import of this institution, which without such a clew we should perhaps never have gathered from it. He instructs us to consider it as 'a seal of the righteousness of faith,' inasmuch as it shadows out a circumcision of the heart, which is an inward seal that the sinner is justified by faith as Abraham was. But as this is a view of the subject which

more properly falls within the range of a New Testament commentary, we shall not enlarge upon it here. (5.) In addition to the reasons above cited for the adoption of this rite, there is another suggested by Saurin, which though intrinsically more appropriate to Abraham himself than to his posterity, is yet well deserving of notice. Whoever looks into the life of this patriarch will perceive that God especially designed him for an eminent pattern of faith and obedience to all succeeding generations. The prominent dispensations of God's providence towards him seem to have been all ordered with a particular view to the trial of his faith, which continually became the more illustrious, the more it was subjected to the ordeal. It was for this end that so long a delay was ordained before the birth of the promised son; and after he was born, that he was required to offer him up in sacrifice, to the extinction of his own hopes, and the apparent nullification of all the gracious promises made to him. Now may we not conceive the command relative to circumcision to have been a part of the same severe but salutary discipline? God did not only defer for the space of twenty years the birth of that son who was so solemnly promised and so impatiently desired, but even when that period was elapsed, instead of seeing the promise accomplished and his faith crowned, God was pleased again to cross his expectation by requiring of him the performance of an act, which, in all human probability, must totally defeat the promise. To the eye of sense it was an operation not only dangerous to adults, but when administered to one of his advanced years, even if he survived it, it would in all likelihood effectually preclude the possibility of his even becoming a father. Indeed the injunction, 'My covenant shall be in your flesh,' to a man of his years could not



11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be 'a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is eight days

t Acts 7. 8. Rom. 4. 11.

but seem as opposite to the promise of having a son, as the command to 'take his son, his only son Isaac, and offer him for a burnt-sacrifice,' was to the promise of his being the father of a numerous posterity. Yet the faith of Abraham triumphed over this as it did over all other obstacles. He was satisfied that notwithstanding every impediment, whether from a fresh physical incapacity in himself or a permanent one in his superannuated wife, God would assuredly by one means or other make good his promise. This was indeed a new and illustrious instance of the faith of the father of the faithful; and we cannot well doubt that among the things of which circumcision was to be a memorial to his posterity, this signal example of believing in the promise in spite of his advanced age and of such a disqualifying operation, was one. Circumcision was enjoined upon the Jews to be a perpetual memento of their strange and supernatural origin, an impressive token at once of the faith of their ancestor, 'who against hope believed in hope,' and of the fidelity of their God, who from one man only, 'and him as good as dead,' was able to raise up a people as numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the sands upon the sea-shore. This idea throws light upon the words of the prophet, Is. 51. 1, 2, 'Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for I called him alone (i. e. when childless), and blessed him and increased him;,' language importing that they were to

old 'shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

u Lev. 12. 3. Luke 2. 21. John 7. 22. Phil. 3. 5.

regard their extraction from Abraham as being as truly miraculous, under the circumstances in which it occurred, as if they had been excavated or quarried out of the solid rock; an allusion to which we are also to recognise in the words of John the Baptist, Mat. 3. 9, 'And think not to say within yourself, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' He has virtually done it once, and he can do it again.

11. *Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin.* Heb. *בשר ערלתכם* *the flesh of your superfluous foreskin*, by a usual hypallage for *foreskin of your flesh*, where 'flesh' has the appropriated meaning elsewhere assigned to it, as Lev. 15. 2, 19. Ezek. 16. 26.—23. 20. The original for 'foreskin' is defined by lexicographers to signify that which is *superfluous* or *redundant*; not that any part of the human body is really and originally superfluous or useless; but in relation to an ordinance it may be termed so, just as it might have been proper to command a Nazarite to shave off his *superfluous* hair—superfluous in relation to his vow. Gr. *ακροβυστία* *akrobustia*, from *ακρον* *extremity* and *βυω* *to cover*. The same word is applied figuratively to other parts, as to the *lips*, Ex. 6. 20, to the *ear*, Jer. 6. 10, to the *heart*, Lev. 26. 41. Is. 6. 10, and in plain allusion to this phrase the apostle James exhorts, ch 1. 21, to 'lay apart all filthiness and *superfluity* of naughtiness,' and in Col. 2. 13, the *uncircumcision* of our flesh is coupled with our estate as *dead in sins*, all betokening that the excis

13 He that is born in thine house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be cir-

cumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

ion of the superfluous prepuce is to be understood as a sign of the mortification of sin and the renewal of our corrupt nature.

12. *He that is eight days old—every child in your generations.* Heb. 'a son of eight days.' This ceremony was to be administered on the eighth day even though that should chance to be the Sabbath; it being one of the Jewish maxims, that 'circumcision drives away the Sabbath.' That this maxim was acted upon in our Saviour's time is clear from John, 7. 22, 23, 'Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me,' &c. The performance of the rite was probably delayed till the eighth day, because that all creatures newly born were counted as in their blood and unclean for seven days, and might not be sooner offered to God, Lev. 12. 2, 3. Neither calf, lamb, nor kid could be presented as an oblation before it was eight days old, Lev. 22. 27. The rite was administered to males only, as they alone were capable of it; but as the man is the head of the woman, she was virtually included in the covenant. From the constructive unity of man and wife, it was proper that in a federal transaction of this nature her agency should be merged in his. But in baptism, to which, under the gospel dispensation, circumcision has given place, Col. 2. 11, 12, males and females stand upon a par in this respect.—¶ *He that is born in the house, or bought with money.* Heb. בִּקְנָה כֶּסֶף *the purchase of silver*; though the term *silver* is a general term for *money* or *price*, just

as *bread* is a general term for *food*. From the position of the Heb. accents and the rendering of most of the ancient versions, it is at least questionable whether our present translation of this clause is correct. The versions alluded to do not connect the phrase 'of any stranger' (Heb. of every son of a stranger) with 'bought,' but read it, according to a common Heb. idiom, as an expression of totality, exegetical of the previous clause, and characterizing still farther the class spoken of in contradistinction to the 'born in the house.' Guided by them we should literally translate the verse—'A son of eight days shall be circumcised unto you; every male in your generations, the born in the house and the purchase of silver, from (i. e. even or including,) every son of the stranger, which is not of the seed.' This we incline to consider the true construction, and if so this passage, however it may be with others, affords no countenance to the idea of Abraham's having bought slaves of others who claimed an ownership in them. It is more likely that the persons in question sold themselves, though it is undoubtedly true that in such cases their children were considered as belonging to their master. The power of a master over his household and slaves at that early period was no doubt very absolute, and he might probably have compelled the observance of this injunction; but still it is more likely that the command did not contemplate a resort to compulsion, as it would be entirely consonant to the ideas and customs of the East that every thing belonging to a person should be affected just as he was. Thus the king of Nineveh, Jon. 3. 8, ordered not only his people, but even

14 And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul

shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

W Ex. 4. 24.

the cattle to put on mourning, when Jonah preached to the city. For this reason there can be no question that the baptism of infants would appear to have great propriety to the primitive Christians, though such infants could have no knowledge of the religion to which it was the introduction and, as it were, the sign.—The command here given was one marked with divine benig- nity, for it not only showed that the love extended to Abraham embraced his whole house, but it also in effect de- clared that the way was opened for the reception, within the pale of the cove- nant, of those who were not of Abra- ham's seed according to the flesh. Whatever were the privileges of that gracious compact, God herein showed himself willing that others should be partakers of them, provided *they* were willing to comply with his prescribed conditions; and accordingly we find that express laws were afterwards giv- en for the admission of proselytes into the communion of the Jewish church.

14. *That soul shall be cut off from his people.* That person. Chal. 'That man.' As infants or little children could not properly be held amenable for the neglect of their parents, whose duty it was to see that their offspring were seasonably circumcised, this of course must be understood of those who, having arrived at years of discre- tion, and become capable of knowing and obeying the will of God in this par- ticular, yet from unbelief, contempt of the ordinance, or fear of pain, failed to compensate by their own act for the delinquency of their parents. It is not easy, however, to say what is the pre- cise meaning of the phrase 'shall be cut off from his people.' The Gr. ren- ders it 'Shall be utterly destroyed from

his stock or kindred.' Chal 'Shall perish from his people.' Though the idea of excommunication, of being no longer considered as one of the peculiar people, would naturally suggest itself as couched under the phrase, yet the original term is very strong, and legiti- mately implies capital punishment, or the excision of the offender by death from that community to which he be- longed, and of which he has proved himself an unworthy member. This was to be done by the sentence of the judges when the crime was known, otherwise it is implied, say the Jewish writers, that he should fall by the hand of God himself cutting him off by pre- mature death. This is confirmed by Lev. 17. 10, 'I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.' Comp. Ex. 31. 14. Lev. 20. 2—5. By several of the Rabbinical writers, how- ever, it was understood to signify some- thing *more* than mere temporal death. Thus Maimonides, speaking of eternal death, says, 'And this is that *cutting off* written of in the law, as it is said, Num. 15. 31, 'That soul shall be cut off;' which we have heard expounded thus; *cut off in this world and cut off in the world to come.*' However it be understood, the threatening is a severe one, and shows conclusively with what reverence God would have his own or- dinances regarded, especially those that bear so directly upon our spiritual in- terests. Having ordained that the sign and the promise should go together, it was at any one's peril that he presum- ed to sunder them. Yet as God desir- eth mercy and not sacrifice, so the sickness or weakness of an infant might warrant a delay of the ceremony; and if one chanced to die before the eighth

15 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name be.

16 And I will bless her, \* and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be

x ch. 18. 10.

day, it was not to be supposed that this circumstance prejudiced its prospects of future happiness. The same remarks are in their spirit applicable to the ordinance of Baptism. It is high presumption to neglect or causelessly to defer it. Some indeed are superstitiously anxious about the early administration of this ordinance to their children, as if their salvation entirely depended upon it. That it should not be needlessly delayed we grant; but the command to circumcise the children on the eighth day sufficiently shows that the children who died under that age, did not perish for the mere want of that ordinance; and Christian parents may be equally assured that if their infants die before they have been initiated in the Christian covenant by baptism, the want of that ordinance will not at all affect their eternal welfare. It is the avowed contempt of the ordinance, and not the providential exclusion from it, that makes us objects of God's displeasure.—The directions here given are to be understood as not only addressed to Abraham personally, but in him to his natural seed in all generations. The reason assigned for this severe edict is, 'He hath broken my covenant;' i. e. hath made frustrate, broken down, demolished, in opposition to the phrase to establish, to make firm, a covenant. Gr. 'Hath dissipated my covenant.' Chal. 'Hath made void my covenant.'

15. Sarah *shall* her name be. Heb. שרה Sarah. Gr. Σάρρα Sarra, expres-

a mother \* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, \* and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

y ch. 35. 11. Gal. 4. 31. 1 Pet. 3. 6. z ch. 18. 12. & 21. 6.

sing the difference solely by doubling the letter *p r*. 'Sarai' properly signifies 'my princess,' as if sustaining that relation to a single individual or to a family. The restriction implied in the possessive 'my' is now to be done away; her limited pre-eminence is to be unspeakably enlarged; and as the letter *h* was inserted in Abraham's name, to signify the multiplication of his seed, so the final yod (*י*) in her name being cancelled the same letter *h*, and probably with the same import, is substituted in its stead. Thus instead of 'my princess,' she is henceforth to bear an appellation importing 'princess of a multitude,' and corresponding with the magnificent promise made to her, v. 16.

16. She *shall* be a mother of nations. Heb. הרה לאמים *shall* be to nations; i. e. shall become nations. This is the first express mention of the destined mother of the seed promised to Abraham. This annunciation would of course correct the error into which both she and her husband had fallen, imagining that the prospect of her having a child was hopeless, and therefore if the promise were fulfilled at all it must be in Ishmael. But now all mistake on that head is precluded. God will give to Abraham a son *of her*, and kings of people shall be *of her*. Their former fault in resorting to a carnal expedient is not to be allowed to stand in the way of the execution of God's purposes of mercy. The divine goodness shines forth conspicuously in this, that

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, \* Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed;

a ch. 18. 10. & 21. 2. Gal. 4. 28.

notwithstanding men in their perverseness do so much to obstruct its course, it is still made to triumph over their unworthiness, and spend itself upon them, even in spite, as it were, of themselves.

17. *Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed.* Not out of incredulity or ridicule, for he was strong in faith, but out of the admiration and joy with which he was transported. Laughter may arise from very different states of mind. It is easy to perceive that in Abraham's case it was prompted by a very different feeling from that which moved the risibilities of Sarah on the occasion mentioned Gen. 18. 12, 13. Chal. 'He rejoiced.' Targ. Jerus. 'He marvelled.' His emotions, entirely free from the levity of spirit which usually we connect with laughter, were doubtless a mixture of wonder and delight. He was overcome with an extacy of surprise that vented itself in this unusual, though not unnatural manner, for we see similar emotions expressing themselves in a similar way in the language of the Psalmist, Ps. 126. 1, 2, 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.' So also Job, 8. 21, 'Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.' In allusion to this circumstance the child, when born, was named *Isaac, laughter*, v. 19. See Note on Gen. 21. 8.

18. *O that Ishmael might live before thee.* Not merely Ishmael in person, but Ishmael in his posterity. The purport of the petition is to be judged of from the answer which was given to it.

and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

From this it would appear that a doubt occurred to Abraham which struck a damp upon his pleasure. The promise of another son he fears will be the destruction of all the hopes centred in the one already given. If he be not required to die to make room for the other, at any rate the promise concerning him may be in great measure frustrated, and the prospect of his blessings vastly diminished. He prays therefore that his apprehensions in this respect may be removed; that not only Ishmael's life be preserved, but that he may *live and prosper*; that he may yet enjoy the distinguished temporal blessings formerly promised him. Chal. 'I would that Ishmael might abide before thee;' i. e. continue to enjoy thy blessing. That the Heb. word (חַיִּים) for 'live,' has often the import of *prospering* will be evident to any one who examines the scriptural usage of the term, particularly as exhibited in Deut. 8. 1. 1 Sam. 25. 6.

19. *Sarah thy wife shall bear.* Heb. יָלְדָה *is bearing*; spoken of as an event now taking place, from its absolute certainty, though a year was to intervene before its actual occurrence. — ¶ *Thou shalt call his name Isaac.* Heb. יִצְחָק *yitzhek, he shall laugh.* Gr. *Isaac*, whence the English *Isaac*. — ¶ *I will establish my covenant with him, &c.* That is, my spiritual covenant, the covenant containing the promise of the Messiah, and all its related privileges and blessings. Yet from the fact that Ishmael was commanded to be circumcised and that the rite was perpetuated in his family, the inference would seem fairly drawn, that the cov-



20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and <sup>b</sup>will multiply him exceedingly: <sup>c</sup>twelve princes shall he beget, <sup>d</sup>and I will make him a great nation.

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, <sup>e</sup>whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

b ch. 16. 10. c ch. 25. 12, 16. d ch. 21. 18. e ch. 21. 2.

enant, in some of its aspects, did properly pertain to him. So far as it had a temporal bearing, Ishmael seems to have been made as much a partaker in it as Isaac, and Esau as Jacob. Nor are we authorized to conclude, from the circumstance of the covenant, in its more spiritual features, being restricted to the line of Isaac, that therefore the line of Ishmael was any disadvantaged as to the prospect of eternal life. The covenant of peculiarity was indeed more especially established with the former, but as many who were included in it might fail of salvation, so many who were excluded from it might still become heirs of salvation. The door of mercy was always open to every one who believed; and in every nation and in every age, he that feared God and wrought righteousness was accepted of him.

20. *I have blessed him and will make him fruitful.* That is, have blessed him by making him fruitful; which though spoken in the past, is to be understood in the future; and that for the same reason that the future is so often used for the past, viz. to indicate the absolute certainty of the event foretold. —¶ *Twelve princes shall he beget.* as Jacob, the son of Isaac, was the father of twelve patriarchs or phylarchs, i. e. heads of tribes, so Ishmael is here made the subject of a parallel predic-

22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23 ¶ And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, in the self-same day, as God had said unto him.

tion, and for its remarkable fulfilment, consult the history, Gen. 25. 12—16.

21. *At this set time next year.* At this very time in the following year. Comp. Gen. 21. 2.

22. *And God went up from Abraham.* Arab. 'The angel of God went up.' Chal. 'The glory of the Lord went up.' That is, the visible majesty of Jehovah, the Shekinah, the symbol of the divine presence. See Gen. 35. 13. Ezek. 1. 29.—8. 4. The whole narrative suggests the idea of a personal interview, and all doubt as to the identity of the personage described is precluded by the express declaration, v. 1, 'I am the Almighty God.'

23. *And Abraham took Ishmael—and circumcised, &c.* That is, ordered it to be done; saw that it was done. As no express directions were given as to the operator, such agents might be employed as the head of the household saw fit. In Ex. 4. 25, we see a mother performing it, but in modern times it is usually performed by some experienced person; and it is not only considered a great honour to be a circumciser (*mohel*), but the occasion is made one of great rejoicing and festivity.—The conduct of Abraham on this occasion furnishes a bright example to all succeeding ages of the manner in which divine ordinances should be complied with. We may remark concerning it,

24 And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

25 And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

26 In the self-same day *was* Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son ;

(1.) That it was *prompt*. Though God had said nothing to him respecting the time of his performing the ceremony, yet we learn that in the self same day that God had spoken to him, the command was put in execution. This was 'making haste, and delaying not to keep his commandments.' Such is evermore the impulse of a truly devoted and affectionate heart. To linger in the practical observance of the divine precepts, to put off till to-morrow what can as well be done to-day, is the evidence of a cold, languid, listless state of heart, and little short of trifling with supreme authority. Such conduct receives no countenance from the example of Abraham. (2.) It was *implicit*. We do not find him inquiring into the *reasons* of the divine injunction, nor asking why such a painful rite had been deferred for so long a time and was now appointed to be observed when he had one foot in the grave. It was sufficient for him that thus God would have it to be. God's will was at once a law and a reason to him, and he yielded an unquestioning obedience. (3.) It was *punctilious*. We have only to read the verse to see how exact was the correspondence between the command of God and the obedience of his servant. A rigid regard to the revealed will of Heaven, even in its minutest particulars, enters deeply into the essence of true religion, and the spirit which dispenses with it, though it may pass under the specious

27 And 'all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

AND the LORD appeared unto him in the 'plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day ;

f ch. 18. 19. a ch. 13. 18. & 14. 13.

name of liberality, is anti-christian. (4.) It was yielded in *old age*, when the infirmity of nature is prone to plead off from engaging in any thing new, or different from that to which it has been accustomed. Yet it seems to be for the purpose of putting honor upon Abraham's obedience, that it is so expressly said, 'Ninety and nine years old was Abraham when he was circumcised.' It is one of the temptations of old age to be tenacious of what we have believed and practised from our youth; to shut our eyes and ears against every thing that may prove it to have been erroneous or defective, and to find excuses from being exempted from hard and dangerous duties. But Abraham to the last was ready to receive farther instruction, and to do as he was commanded, leaving consequences with God. This shows that the admonition to 'walk before him, and be perfect,' had not been given in vain.

21. *And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised.* From this circumstance the Arabians and other descendants of Ishmael, and indeed all the followers of Mohammed, defer circumcision till the age of thirteen, and when it occurs it is made a festival occasion of great rejoicing.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

1. *And the Lord appeared unto him.* Heb. *וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו* *was seen of him.* This clause states in a general manner

2<sup>b</sup> And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: <sup>c</sup> and when he

<sup>b</sup> Heb. 13. 2. <sup>c</sup> ch. 19. 1. 1 Pet. 4. 9.

the incident which is more fully detailed in its particulars in the ensuing verses. As we gather from the sequel, the object of this renewed manifestation of the divine presence was again to repeat the promise of a son, and to make known to Abraham the purposed destruction of Sodom. It was probably vouchsafed a short time after the events recorded in the preceding chapter.—¶ *In the plains of Mamre.* Or, Heb. באֵלֶּךְ מִמְרֵא *in the oaks, or the oak-grove of Mamre.* See Note on Gen 13. 18.—¶ *He sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day.* The intense heat of those eastern climes still compels the labourer and the traveller to seek shelter and rest during the middle of the day. ‘Often has my mind reverted to the scene of the good old patriarch sitting in the door of his tent in the heat of the day. When the sun is at the meridian, the wind often becomes softer, and the heat more oppressive; and then may be seen the people seated in the *doors* of their *huts*, to inhale the breezes, and to let them blow on their almost naked bodies.’ *Roberts.* The scene here described presents a beautiful picture of patriarchal manners, and one strikingly accordant with the customs of other nations of remote antiquity, as transmitted to us by their historians and poets, particularly Homer, who thus describes the hospitable Axylus;—

Fast by the road his ever-open door  
Obliged the wealthy and relieved the poor.  
*Iliad, B. 6.*

‘The annotators on this chapter seem to have had in view the single tent of Abraham, with flocks and herds feeding around. But there must have been many tents for his numerous dependants and servants; while the bulk of

saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

his cattle were probably at pasture many miles distant. Among the Bedouin tribes it is the duty of the chief or sheikh to entertain strangers, and as the custom requires them to stop at the first tent they reach, the sheikh’s tent is usually pitched so as to be the first in that direction from which strangers most commonly arrive. This custom would account for Abraham’s being the first to perceive the strangers as he sat in the shade of his tent-door to enjoy any air that might be stirring, while the heat of the day rendered the interior of the tent too close and sultry to be conveniently occupied. In the heat of the day the external shade of the tent is much more cool and pleasant than the interior.’ *Pict. Bible.*

2. *And he lifted up his eyes and looked.* ‘To lift up the eyes does not mean to look upward, but to look directly at an object, and that earnestly. A man coming from the jungle might say, ‘As I came this morning, I lifted up my eyes, and behold, I saw three elephants.’ ‘Have you seen any thing to-day in your travels?’—‘I have not lifted up my eyes.’ ‘I do not see the thing you sent me for, sir.’—‘Just lift up your eyes, and you will soon find it.’ *Roberts.*—¶ *And lo, three men stood by him.* Such they were in outward appearance, but the Apostle Heb. 13. 1, calls them ‘angels,’ whom Abraham entertained unawares, i. e. not knowing them to be such. To him they appeared to be three strangers on a journey, and as such he treated them. But it is generally conceded that two of these were created angels. As to the third, it can scarcely be doubted that he was the same divine personage who, under the name of ‘Angel,’ or ‘Angel of Jehovah,’ so frequently appeared to the

3 And said, My lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant :

patriarchs in human form. Certain it is that this personage appears in the subsequent part of the narrative, v. 13—22, and yet there is not the least intimation of any other appearance than that of the three men whom Abraham entertained. The inference therefore is fair that the Son of God, anticipating thus his future manifestation in the flesh, constituted one of the company. The persons that now appeared at the tent-door of Abraham were certainly unknown to him. He was ignorant of their quality, their country, and their destination ; yet his behaviour to them was as respectful as if they had been attended by a pompous retinue, or had sent a messenger to him beforehand announcing their names, and their intention of paying him a visit. With how much propriety the Apostle inculcates the duty of hospitality from this incident will be obvious at once, and we may remark in addition, that those who hold themselves in readiness to show kindness to the stranger and the traveller, may chance sometimes to be favoured with the presence of guests who will have it in their power and in their hearts to bless them as long as they live.—¶ *He ran to meet them.* His generosity on this occasion is not more conspicuous than the amiable manner in which it was expressed. The instant he sees them, he rises up, as by a kind of instinctive courtesy, to bid them welcome to his tent, and that in the most respectful manner. This and other passages in the Bible may be illustrated by the gradations of Persian etiquette. When a Persian is visited by a very superior person he crosses the open court of his house, and receives him at the street-door ; if decidedly su-

4 Let <sup>d</sup> a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree

d ch. 19. 2. & 43. 24.

perior, but not greatly so, he rises hastily and advances to receive his visiter at the entrance of the room ; if the visiter be an equal, he simply rises from his seat on his entrance ; and if an inferior, he only makes the motion of rising.—¶ *Bowed himself toward the ground.* Heb. *וירשח*. The original word is elsewhere rendered ‘worshipped,’ as is also the corresponding Gr. term *προσκυνεω* *proskuneo* both in the Old and New Testament. Its primary meaning is *to do homage, or pay obedience to one*, but whether this homage be *civil* or *religious* cannot be determined from the word itself ; this must be ascertained from the context. Thus where one Evangelist, Mat. 8. 2, says, ‘Behold there came a leper and *worshipped* him,’ another, Mark 1. 40, speaking of the same incident, says, ‘And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and *kneeling down* to him.’ This determines the sense of ‘worship’ in the former passage to be *merely assuming a reverential posture*. So also, Luke 14. 10, ‘Then shalt thou have *worship* in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee ;’ i. e. have reverence. In the present case, Abraham’s bowing was doubtless intended rather as a token of civil respect than as an act of religious adoration ; for he seems not at first to have been aware of the true character of his guests, particularly the principal of them.

3. *And said, My lord.* Addressing himself to that one of the three who had the most dignified and commanding air, or who perhaps advanced somewhat in front of the rest.—¶ *If now I have found favour in thy sight.* That is, if you are disposed to do me a favour, pass not away, &c.

5 And \* I will fetch a morsel of bread, and I comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass

e Judg. 6. 18. & 13. 15. f Judg. 19. 5. Ps. 104. 15.

4. *Let a little water be fetched, and wash your feet.* That is, have them washed; for this was performed by servants, and not by the guests themselves. 'Water for the feet is a necessary and most grateful part of hospitality in the East. Where the people wear sandals, which are intended only to protect the soles, the feet soon become foul and parched; and to have the feet and ankles bathed is the most gratifying of refreshments after that of quenching thirst. The office is usually performed by servants. Mr. Roberts mentions, that in passing through Hindoo villages it is common to see this office performed for the weary traveller. In the sandy deserts of Arabia and the bordering countries no covering for the feet can prevent the necessity for this refreshment at the end of a day's journey. The fine impalpable sand or dust penetrates all things, and, with the perspiration, produces an itching and feverish irritation, which, next to the quenching of his thirst, it is the first wish of a traveller to allay; and to uncover his feet, and to get water to wash them, is a prime object of attention. If sandals only are used, or the feet are entirely without defence, it becomes still more necessary to wash them after a journey.' *Pict. Bible.*

—¶ *Rest yourselves.* Heb. *הִשְׁכַּחְתֶּם* *lean ye down.* Gr. *καταψῆστε refresh yourselves.*—¶ *Under the tree.* Collect. sing. for 'trees,' as his tent stood in a grove.

5. *I will fetch a morsel of bread.* As before remarked, 'bread' among the Hebrews was the general name for any kind of food. Nothing is more remarkable than the refinement of this address. He diminishes as much as pos-

sible the merit of every office he proposes to perform for them. If they are to be refreshed with water, he calls it 'a little water;' and if with food he calls it 'a morsel of bread.' In order to spare them the formality of apologies and relieve them from the anxiety they might feel under the apprehension of the trouble he might be at on their account, he says not a word of the best of the entertainments which he determined to provide for them.

g ch. 19. 8. & 33. 10.

—¶ *Comfort ye your hearts.* Heb. *לִבְכֶם סִדֵּר* *sustain, uphold, strengthen your hearts.* Gr. *παρεσβε eat.* Thus Judg. 9. 5, 'Comfort (Heb. *סִדֵּר stay*) your hearts with a morsel of bread.' Hence bread is termed the *staff* of life, and the Lord threatens by the prophet, Is. 3. 1, to 'take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the *stay* and the *staff*, the whole *stay* of bread and the whole *staff* of water.'—¶ *For therefore are ye come to your servant.* Heb. 'For

therefore have ye passed by (*עָבַרְתֶּם*) to your servant,' i. e. for this has it been so ordered in Providence that your steps have been conducted hither. Not that he would intimate that *their* sole design in passing that way was to avail themselves of his generous hospitality, but that God had so ordered things, that *he* was bound to regard them and treat them as if sent with that special purpose. The sentiment so casually intimated in the text discloses a very interesting trait in Abraham's character as a pious man. It shows how habitually he recognised a superintending and directing Providence. Even an incident so apparently fortuitous as the passing by his door of a few strangers he instinctively refers to the ordering of heaven, and therefore feels that in



6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three meas-

ures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

obeying the impulses of a benevolent heart he is at the same time discharging a duty expressly enjoined upon him by the circumstances of the case. His example teaches us to consider every unexpected opportunity for befriending our fellow-creatures as divinely afforded.—¶ *So do as thou hast said.* 'How exceedingly simple was all this! No compliment on either side, but such as a generous heart and sound sense dictate.' A. Clarke.

6. Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah. That is, into Sarah's tent, into the woman's apartment, which was separated from his.—¶ *Make ready quickly three measures of meal.* Heb. מִקְרָר שֶׁשׁ סֵאִים *hasten three seahs of meal.* A 'seah' contained about two gallons and a half.—¶ *Knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.* 'It seems very strange to us that in such an establishment as that of the patriarch there was not ready baked bread for the strangers. But the fact is, that in the East to this day, so much bread and no more than will suffice for the household is baked daily, as the common bread will not keep good longer than a day in a warm climate. They also prefer bread when it is new. In the East, it is only in large towns that there are bakers by trade. In villages and camps every family bakes its own bread; and while journeying in the East we always found that, except in towns, the women of the families which entertained us always went to work immediately after our arrival, kneading the dough and baking 'cakes,' generally on spacious round or oblong plates, of thin and soft bread, which were ready in an astonishingly short time. We have often watched the various processes with

great interest, and traced the analogies they afforded to the usages recorded in the Bible. As we shall have occasion to describe these processes in notes to the various passages which refer to them, we now only notice that which is supposed to be here intended, and which is still in use among the Arabs and other people of the East. It is done by kindling a fire upon the ground or hearth: when the ground is sufficiently heated the fire is removed and the dough placed, and being covered with the hot ashes and embers is soon baked, although not so rapidly as by some other processes, the cakes being thicker and not so wide as those in most common use. Another process resembles this, except that, instead of the bare hearth, a circle of small stones is arranged, and these being heated, the paste is spread over them, and then overlaid with hot cinders. This is thinner than the former, and is only used by the Arabs for their morning meal. Sarah's process was probably the first mentioned. It may seem extraordinary to see a lady of such distinction as Sarah, the wife of a powerful chief, occupied in this menial service. But even now this duty devolves on the women of every household; and among those who dwell in tents, the wife of the proudest chief is not above superintending the preparation of the bread, or even kneading and baking it with her own hands. Tamar, the daughter of a king, seems to have acquired distinction as a good baker of bread (see 2 Sam. 13. 5—10); and there are few of the heavy duties which fall upon the women of the East which they are more anxious to do well, and get credit for, than this. It is among the very first of an Eastern female's *accomplish-*

7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a

young man; and he hasted to dress it.

*ments.* The other duties of the kitchen sitll often devolve upon the wives, even in families of distinction. When Dr. Richardson was at Jerusalem he was, as a physician, consulted about the complaints of the ladies of a Turk of high consideration, called Omar Effendi. 'I was surprised,' says the doctor, 'to hear many of them ascribe their complaints to fatigue, which, I was informed, arose from their employment in the kitchen.' *Pict. Bible.*

7. *A calf tender and good.* 'Here again the European reader is struck no less at the want of preparation than by the apparent rapidity with which the materials of a good feast were supplied. The dough was to be kneaded and the bread baked; and the meat had not only to be dressed but killed. The fact is, the Orientals consume a very small quantity of animal food; and the nomades, with their ample flocks and herds, less than other Orientals. In our own journeys meat was never to be found ready killed, except in large towns, and then only in the mornings. There was probably not a morsel of meat in Abraham's camp, in any shape whatever. The usages of the Aeneze Arabs, as stated by Burckhardt, in his 'Notes on the Bedouins,' strikingly illustrate this entertainment prepared by Abraham for his visitants; and we know that, with some unimportant differences, the statement applies generally to other Arab tribes. Their usual fare (called *ayesh*) consists of flour made into a paste, and boiled with sour camel's milk. This is their daily and universal dish; and the richest sheikh would think it disgraceful to order his wife to prepare any other dish merely to please his own palate. The Arabs never indulge in animal food and other *luxuries*

but on the occasion of some great festival, or on the arrival of a stranger. If the guest is a common person, *bread is baked* and served up with the *ayesh*; if the guest is a person of some small consequence, coffee is prepared for him, and also a dish called *behatta* (rice or flour boiled with sweet camel's milk), or that called *fiétat* (baked paste, kneaded up thoroughly with butter); but for a man of some rank, a kid or lamb is killed. When this happens, the lamb is boiled with *bourgoul* (wheat dried in the sun after having been boiled) and camel's milk; and served up in a large wooden dish, around the edge of which the meat is placed. A wooden bowl, containing the melted fat of the animal, is put and pressed down in the midst of the boiled wheat; and every morsel is dipped into this melted fat before it is swallowed. A bowl of camel's milk is frequently handed round after a meal. Now in this account of the Arab mode of entertaining a stranger we have all the circumstances of Abraham's entertainment, if we change his 'calf' for a sheep, lamb, or kid. Here are the *bread* newly baked, the *butter* and the *milk*. If we should suppose that the process of boiling the choice parts of the calf was too long for the present occasion, we may conclude that the choice parts were cut up into small bits, and, being run upon small spits or skewers, broiled over the fire: this being a mode very common in the East of preparing a hasty meal of animal food. We have not supposed that the animal was dressed and served up entire, as that would have required more time than the haste of preparing a meal for merely passing strangers would allow. But amongst the Arabs, and indeed other Eastern people, it is

8 And <sup>h</sup>he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had

h ch. 19. 3.

dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

not unusual at their entertainments to serve up a lamb or kid that has been baked whole in a hole in the ground, which after being heated and having received the carcase, is covered over with stones. It is less usual now in the East to kill a calf than it seems to have been in the times of the Bible. The Arabs, Turks, and others think it monstrous extravagance to kill an animal which becomes so large and valuable when full grown. This consideration seems to magnify Abraham's liberality in being so ready to kill a calf for strangers.' *Pict. Bible*.—¶ *Gave it unto a young man*. That is, to a servant. See Note on Gen. 14. 24.—¶ *Hasted to dress it*. That is, to cook it. Judging from our modern notions of cookery, it may seem strange to many readers that a calf just killed should be immediately roasted. But the Orientals are still fond of eating meat just killed. It is said then to be tender and juicy. 'It seems to us rather revolting that the meat should be dressed and eaten so immediately after being killed. But it is still the custom in the East to dress meat very soon after the animal has been killed, and very often before the warmth of life has departed from it: and in a journey we have ourselves often eaten boiled mutton in less than two hours after the sheep had been killed; and broiled mutton in a much shorter time. The custom doubtless originated in the heat of the climate, which precluded meat from being kept long; and, as a custom, came to be applied in seasons and regions where the originating cause did not immediately operate. Mr. Roberts, in a remark on 1 Sam. 28. 24, 25, observes, that in India the natives affect to be disgusted with the English for keeping

fowls six or eight hours before they are cooked, and say we are fond of eating *chettareychc*, i. e. dead flesh. He adds, 'There are some Englishmen who become so accustomed to these things, that they have the chicken grilled, and on their table, which a quarter of an hour before was playing in the yard.' '*Pict. Bible*.

8. *He took butter*. 'The continual mention of butter as an independent dish, and as a proverbial sign of plenty, is calculated to astonish an European reader. The word, as used in the Bible, implies butter and cream in various states of consistence. Annotators have discussed whether, in the present instance, the meat was dished up with butter, or that the latter formed an independent dish. It might well be both or either, if we judge from present Arab usages, which furnish ample illustrations of the extraordinary use of butter among the Hebrews. The butter is usually made with the milk of sheep or goats, and is used to an excess which it seems amazing that the human stomach can bear. All Arab food, considered well prepared, swims in butter, and large quantities are swallowed independently in a solid or liquid state. Burckhardt mentions that those who can afford such luxury swallow every morning a large cup full of butter before breakfast; and even snuff a good quantity up their nostrils. Some tribes welcome a guest by pouring a cup of melted butter on his head. Our way of spreading butter thinly on bread seems the height of absurdity to them, and indeed to other Asiatics. When they do eat it with bread at all, it is in the way which was taught us by a Bedouin, who observing us sitting on the ground and refreshing ourselves with buttered

bread and dates, looked compassionately on our ignorance of the true use of butter, and to give us a valuable lesson on the subject, commenced breaking off a thin bit of bread, about the size of a crown piece, and heaping thereon as large a lump of butter as it would support, threw it into his mouth with great satisfaction. He pursued this instruction until his rapid progress towards the bottom of our butter skin obliged us to declare ourselves sufficiently instructed. Burckhardt, in allusion to the extraordinary use of butter among the Arabs, observes, 'the continual motion and exercise in which they employ themselves, strengthen their powers of digestion, and for the same reason an Arab will live for months together on the smallest allowance; and then, if an opportunity should offer, he will devour at one sitting the flesh of half a lamb, without any injury to his health.' This in some degree accounts for the extraordinary quantity of food which here and elsewhere we find prepared for a very few persons; or a reason perhaps is found in the existing practice throughout Western Asia of producing at entertainments from five to ten times the quantity of food which the invited guests can consume, the residue going to feast the women and the host of servants and dependents which men of consideration support. It is the same in camps, where a great number of hungry Arabs or Tartars got some benefit from the feasts which their sheikh or some wealthy person provides for a stranger.' *Pict. Bible*.—¶ *And milk.* 'Milk, in its various forms, constitutes a principal article of diet among the Arabs and other pastoral tribes; and also enters largely as an ingredient into the composition of their prepared dishes. Many tribes live almost exclusively on dates and milk meals. Butter has been mentioned, and cheese will claim a future notice. When pasturage is good

sweet milk is handed round after an Arab meal. They also make much use of butter-milk; and coagulated sour milk, diluted with water, is in very general use both among the Arabs and other inhabitants of Western Asia. Although unpleasant at first to strangers, the natives swallow it with avidity, and it is really famed to be very refreshing in a warm climate. Either this or sweet milk is probably intended in the text. They make cream by the usual process, which is scarcely inferior to that of Devonshire. From the frequent mention which is made of milk, milk meals must have been very common among the Hebrews, who seem to have been always, even in their settled state, more a pastoral than an agricultural people. In Prov. 27. 27, goat's milk, of course understood in its preparations, is mentioned as a principal article of diet in a Hebrew household. The milk of goats is perhaps there mentioned as being of the best quality. It is decidedly so considered in the East. The Arabs drink camel's milk (see note on ch. 32. 15); but all their butter and cheese is made with the milk of goats and sheep, which are milked by the women every morning before daybreak. Cow's milk, where it is to be had, is held in comparative little esteem, and is, in fact, much inferior to that which our cows produce; perhaps because these animals cannot thrive well upon the wild and often scanty pastures of those regions.' *Pict. Bible*.—¶ *Stood by them.* Heb. *אָמַד* *omad*, was standing. Chal. 'Ministered unto them.' 'Standing,' in the idiom of the Scriptures, is often equivalent to *waiting upon, serving, or ministering unto*. Thus, Neh. 12. 44, 'Judah rejoiced for the priests and the Levites that waited;' Heb. 'that stood.' Jer. 52. 12, 'Neduzar-adan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon.' Heb. 'stood before.' Jer. 40. 10, 'As for me, behold I will dwell at Mizpeh to

9 ¶ And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, <sup>i</sup> in the tent.

10 And he said, I <sup>k</sup> will certainly return unto thee <sup>i</sup> according to the time of life; and lo, <sup>m</sup> Sarah thy wife shall have a son.

<sup>i</sup> ch. 24. 67. k ver. 14. l 2 Kings, 4. 16. m ch. 17. 19, 21. & 21. 2. Rom. 9. 9.

*serve* the Chaldeans;’ Heb. ‘to stand before.’ On the contrary, ‘sitting’ is a sign of supremacy or government. Ps. 29. 10, ‘The Lord *sitteth* upon the flood;’ i. e. reigneth over it. Is 16. 5, ‘And in mercy shall the throne be established, and he shall *sit upon it* in truth in the tabernacle of David;’ i. e. he shall reign upon it. Ps. 110. 11, ‘*Sit* thou at my right hand;’ i. e. reign thou. Mat. 23. 2, ‘The Scribes and the Pharisees *sit* in Moses’s seat;’ i. e. exercise authority in the name of Moses. Although the patriarch was now a great prince in the land, as princes were then accounted, and though he had not long before this vanquished kings, yet not only did he, upon the first sight of these his guests, bow himself to the ground, but while they sat at meat he thought it not beneath his dignity to stand and wait upon them.

9. *And they said unto him where is Sarah thy wife.* This question must have excited surprise; for how should these strangers know the name of Abraham’s wife, and her new name too; and why should they inquire after her? The relations of the sexes are so peculiar in the East, that such inquiries are never made. Mr. Buckingham in his lectures remarks that one who should ask another of the health of his wife and family would be considered as offering him a downright insult. But if this inquiry must have struck Abraham with surprise, what followed must have astounded him still more.—¶ *And he said, Behold in the tent.* That is, in the women’s apartments. In

And Sarah heard *it* in the tent-door, which *was* behind him.

11 Now <sup>a</sup> Abraham and Sarah *were* old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah <sup>o</sup> after the manner of women.

<sup>n</sup> ch. 17. 17. Rom. 4. 19. Heb. 11. 11, 12, 19. <sup>o</sup> ch. 31. 35.

saying this he probably pointed with his finger to the tent.

10. *And he said, I will certainly return unto thee.* Heb. שׁוּב אֲשׁוּר *returning I will return*, the strongest and most emphatic mode of affirmation. The speaker in the former verse is not especially designated; but here he who was first in the train on their arrival, and whom he had addressed in terms of the highest respect, now speaks to Abraham respecting that promise *as his own*, which had been given in the foregoing chapter by the Almighty God; and he expressly engages for its accomplishment. This must have opened his eyes to the true character of the being who addressed him. He must have recognised in him no other than Jehovah under the appearance of a man. It is not however to be understood that the predicted ‘return,’ was to be made in the same visible or personal manner, but it was to be in the *efficient fulfilment* of the thing promised, called, ch. 21. 1, ‘a visitation.’ So the New Testament speaks of a ‘coming of Christ,’ which was to be not a personal return to the earth, but a spiritual coming, accomplished in the works of Providence, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, 2 Thess. 2. 8.—¶ *According to the time of life.* Heb. כְּעֵת חַיָּה *according to the living time*. A singularly ambiguous phrase, upon which a great variety of interpretations has been grafted. The most probable of these, we think, is that of the Persic version; ‘According to the time of that which



12 Therefore Sarah <sup>p</sup> laughed within herself, saying, <sup>q</sup> After I

am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my <sup>r</sup> lord being old also?

p ch. 17. 17. q Luke 1. 18.

r 1 Pet. 3. 6.

is born, or the birth;' i. e. according to the time necessary for the production of a living child, or at the end of nine months. This is perhaps confirmed by ch. 21. 1, 2, 'And the Lord visited Sarah as he said; for Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.'—¶ *Sarah heard it in the tent-door which was behind him.* He probably sat in such a manner relatively to the door of Sarah's tent, that his back was turned towards it, so that if he had been a mere man he could not have noticed the fact of her laughing. That he was aware of it, showed his omniscience. 'The form of Abraham's tent, as thus described, seems to have been exactly like the one in which we sat; for in both, there was a shaded open front, in which he could sit in the heat of the day, and yet be seen from afar off; and the apartment of the females, where Sarah was, when he stated her to be *within* the tent, was immediately *behind* this, wherein she prepared the meal for the guests, and from whence she listened to their prophetic declaration.' *Buckingham.*

12. *Therefore Sarah laughed within herself.* Busied in her domestic engagements, and withheld by the etiquette of eastern society, Sarah was not present while these illustrious strangers partook of the refreshment provided for them; but being close at hand, she overheard the inquiries made after her, and the assurance given to Abraham that she should bear him a son. Not able to credit these tidings, she laughed within herself, supposing that as it was to herself only that she laughed, the whole was unknown. But it was not. The Lord saw what passed in her heart and testified his

displeasure on account of it. However secret may be the actings of sin, God will not fail to notice and reprove it. Sarah might indeed have said, that she had done nothing but what Abraham himself had done the very last time that the divine purpose respecting a son had been announced to him. But though the external act of laughing was the same in both cases, yet the principle from which it sprang was widely different. Abraham's was a laugh of admiration and joy; Sarah's was a laugh of unbelief and distrust. 'They did not more agree in their desire,' says Bp. Hall, 'than differ in their affection. Abraham laughed because he believed it would be so, Sarah because she believed it could not be so.' Her conduct, however, though exceedingly faulty, was not prompted by a profane or impious rejection of the proffered mercy, but by laying too much stress on the necessity of *natural means* to produce a *natural effect*, and thus failing to give glory to God as able to accomplish his purposes in spite of every opposing obstacle. The rebuke, therefore, was comparatively gentle, and connected with a renewal of the promise.—¶ *My lord being old also.* This passage taken in connection with another which contains an allusion to it, affords a striking proof how ready God is to mark whatever is good in our actions, while he casts a veil over the evil with which it is accompanied. At the very time that Sarah yielded to unbelief, she exercised a reverential regard for her husband, and this fact is recorded to her honour by the apostle Peter and proposed as an example to all married women, while the infirmity that she betrayed on the same occasion is passed over in si-

13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

14 \*Is any thing too hard for

s Jer. 32. 17. Zech. 8. 6. Matt. 3. 9. & 19. 26. Luke 1. 37.

lence;—‘In this manner in the old time the holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, *calling him lord.*’ The Scriptures afford numerous instances in which God has manifested the same condescension to his frail and sinful creatures. The existence of ‘some good thing towards the Lord’ often avails, as in the case of young Abijah, 1 Kings, 14. 13, to turn away the eye of Jehovah from manifold imperfections in other respects. This is a great encouragement to us amidst all the weakness that we feel; and we may be assured that if, on the one hand, the evils of our hearts will be disclosed, so, on the other, there is not a good purpose or inclination that shall not be made manifest and abundantly rewarded in the great day.

13. *The Lord said unto Abraham wherefore, &c.* Sarah may not at this time have come into the presence of the guests, and for that reason the interrogation may have been put to her husband. If she had, Abraham was perhaps called to answer for his wife in order to render the reproof more pointed to Sarah; for to an ingenuous mind nothing can be more galling than to hear an innocent person called in question for our fault.

14. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* Heb. *היכלא מרהוה דבר* *is any word too wonderful for Jehovah?* That is, any thing which can be spoken of, any thing which is a matter for words. See Note on ch. 15. 1. In detecting the sinfulness of Sarah’s laughter in the preceding verse, he points out

the LORD? ‘At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

t ch. 17. 21. ver. 10. 2 Kings, 4. 16.

the principle of it; it was saying, ‘Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old?’ This principle he silences by the present question, ‘Is any thing too hard for the Lord?’ Unbelief is apt to have respect to the power rather than the veracity of God. It asks with Moses, ‘*Can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?*’ But God has given such abundant evidences of his power, that no apparent impossibilities ought at all to shake the steadfastness of our faith. Did he not form the universe out of nothing by a simple act of his will? Did he not give laws to all the heavenly bodies, and does he not still preserve them in their orbits? Does he not also supply the wants of every living creature upon earth? How absurd then for Sarah to suppose that her age, together with that of her husband, was any effectual obstacle to the accomplishment of God’s word. One moment’s reflection on his omnipotence should banish unbelief forever from our hearts.—¶ *At the time appointed I will return, &c.* It is humiliating to think what a necessity our unbelief imposes upon God to impart and renew his promises to us; and the earnestness with which the promise so often given is here repeated, shows the just displeasure which Sarah’s incredulity had excited in the bosom of God. We cannot indeed but be filled with amazement that he did not rather say, ‘Since you treat my promises with secret derision, you shall never be made partaker of them.’ But God well knows the weakness of the human heart, and therefore deals tenderly with offenders. Were he to suffer our unbelief to make

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid.

And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

void his truth, no one of his promises would ever be fulfilled. But he has assured us that this shall not be the case, and if any thing will put to shame our unbelief, surely this will. Such condescension and compassion cannot but prevail upon us more forcibly than a thousand menaces.

15. *Then Sarah denied, saying, &c.* The above language, while it proved that he who uttered it was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, covered Sarah's face with confusion. But instead of confessing, or attempting to extenuate her fault, she, in her fright, denied the fact altogether. Alas, how awfully prolific is sin! One seldom comes alone. It generally brings a multitude of others to justify or conceal it. But it is in vain to cover our iniquities. God sees through the cobweb veil, and will charge upon us the aggravated guilt which we thus foolishly contract. We may imagine that what merely passes in our own minds has in a manner no existence, and may almost persuade ourselves to think we are innocent. But in the presence of God all such subterfuges are no better than the fig-leaves of our first parents. When he judgeth, he will overcome.—¶ *For she was afraid.* This sinful fear, or 'amazement,' as it is rendered in the Vulg. betrayed her into the denial of which she was guilty. For that reason the Apostle, 1 Pet. 3. 6, when he proposes Sarah as a pattern of obedience to women, though he makes no mention of her laughing, yet he does insinuate an indirect reflection upon her fear; 'Whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.' In this respect he would have them avoid following her example.—¶ *Nay, but thou didst laugh.* As if he had said, 'Do not deny

what I know to be true;' a short but pungent reply, and when accompanied by the piercing and majestic look with which it was doubtless uttered, must have sunk to her very heart. But it was the wound of a friend, which is faithful. It seems to have been a signal mercy to her, thus to have had her secret sin detected and reproved. From this time we hear no more of her unbelief; on the contrary, the rebuke administered to her was effectual for the confirming and establishing her faith. In the account given of the most eminent saints who were distinguished for their faith, Sarah herself is mentioned; and her faith is said to have been instrumental to the accomplishment of that very promise, which in the first instance she had disbelieved. And how many have found similar reason to bless God for the fidelity of their friends, or for the inward rebukes of their own consciences! Had their sin passed without notice, they had lived and died under its dominion; but by a timely discovery of it, they have been led to repentance, and stirred up to the exercise of virtues which they had previously neglected.—In closing our remarks upon the incident here recorded, we cannot forbear the suggestion, that we are admonished by it to beware of every thought, every publication, every person, that would teach us to receive even the minutest portion of the revelation of God with the feeling of incredulity, or the smile of ridicule. The protection of the most crowded assembly, the secrecy of the most private retirement, will be alike unavailing to shield us from the eye of him from whom no secrets are hid. Let us be careful that he never sees on our countenance the smile of distrust, the sneer of derision at his promises, his precepts,

16 ¶ And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them <sup>u</sup> to bring them on the way.

u Rom. 15. 24. 3 John 6.

his people. However common a sin this may be in a bold, skeptical, gain-saying age, and however little thought of, it will be unceasingly remembered with grief and anguish amidst the retributions of the coming world. The profane joke, the contemptuous epithet, the supercilious sneer, the open ridicule, the downright mockery of the saints, are all registered, and how will the eternal echo of that impious laugh sound in the ear of conscience, when every excuse will be silenced, and every denial vain! 'NAY, BUT THOU DIDST LAUGH' will continue to awaken new pains of remorse in the soul of the scorner when he and laughter shall have been long strangers, and when tears, and sighing, and mourning, and woe, have become his unchangeable portion; for of laughter such as this the word of God has pronounced, 'The end of that mirth is heaviness;' 'Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep.'

16. *The men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom.* Set their faces in that direction, as if they intended to travel thither. Thus, Luke, 9. 53, 'His face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.'—¶ *Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.* Heb. לְשַׁלְּחָם *to send them away.* Gr. συμπεριπερὶν αὐτοῖς, conveying the twofold idea of *dismissing and accompanying*. The courteous dismissal of friends and brethren who have been entertained as guests, by accompanying them some distance on their way, is a duty frequently enjoined in the New Testament. Thus, 3 John 6, 'Whom if thou *bring forward on their journey* after a godly sort, thou shalt do well.' See to the same purpose Rom. 15. 24.

17 And the LORD said, <sup>w</sup> Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

w Ps. 25. 14. Amos 3. 7. John 15. 15.

1 Cor. 16. 11. Acts, 20. 38. From v. 22, it would appear that it was only the two angels who now took their leave. He who is called 'Jehovah' seems to have remained, and Abraham, after conducting the two some little distance, probably returned into the presence of his Divine guest, when the circumstances afterwards mentioned occurred.

17. *Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?* That is, which I purpose to do. What is contained in this and the two ensuing verses may be considered as forming a divine soliloquy uttered during the interval of Abraham's absence with the two angels. The divine condescension shines forth very conspicuously in this transaction. God's regard to his own peculiar people surpasses almost the bounds of credibility. Who would suppose that he 'whose ways are in the great deep,' should yet humble himself so far as to 'do nothing without first revealing his secret unto his servants the prophets!' But Abraham was honoured to be called 'the friend of God;' he was as it were, 'the man of his covenant,' and between friends and associates it is expected there will be freedom and openness of intercourse, and a mutual imparting of counsels. Abraham indeed could have no view or purpose but what lay open to the eye of God, as soon as formed within his own breast; but the designs of the Most High could be known to him only as they were revealed. Jehovah in his righteous judgment had now determined to take signal vengeance on Sodom and Gomorrah, for their crying iniquities; but his favoured servant was deeply interested in the fate of those cities, and he knew not how to proceed in the work

18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be <sup>x</sup> blessed in him ?

19 For I know him, <sup>y</sup> that he

<sup>x</sup> ch. 12. 3. & 22. 18. Acts 3. 25. Gal. 3. 8.  
<sup>y</sup> Deut. 4. 9, 10. & 6. 7. Josh. 24. 15. Eph. 6. 4.

of destruction till he had apprised him of his intention, and given him an opportunity of interceding for them. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.'

18. *Seeing that Abraham shall surely become, &c.* Heb. הָיָה יִרְאֵה אֲבְרָהָם *being shall be*; i. e. shall assuredly become. Although God was pleased in the preceding verse to adopt the interrogative form of speech, yet it is to be considered as in fact a most emphatic negative. 'Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? No, I will not, for I know,' &c. We have in this and the following verse the reasons assigned for the decision to which he comes. The first is the dignity and importance of his character, and the great things which he had purposed to do for him. It is a reason *a fortiori*; as if he had said, 'Seeing I have determined to bestow upon Abraham the greater favour of making him a great nation, and of blessing in him all other nations, surely I may confer upon him the less, of making him acquainted with my present purpose of destroying Sodom.' Where God has begun to do good to his servants he follows them with still accumulating mercies. The past is a pledge for the future, and they may, like Rachel, name their blessings 'Joseph,' saying, 'The Lord will yet add another.'

19. *For I know him that he will command, &c.* This is usually understood by commentators as a second and separate reason for the proposed annunciation to Abraham, viz. that he would make good use of the intelligence afforded him, and so aim to impress it upon

will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

his household, that it should operate as a warning to his posterity in all future ages of the consequences of bold transgression, and a powerful motive to 'keeping the way of the Lord and doing justice and judgment.' But its connection with the preceding verse seems too close to admit of this construction. We take it rather as a statement of the conditions on which the previous promise of enlargement and blessing should be fulfilled—conditions which Omniscience saw would be complied with on Abraham's part. 'Abraham shall become a great nation and a source of blessing to the world, because I know that he will be faithful in the discharge of his duties as the head of a family, and thus do what in him lies to perpetuate the promised good to his most distant posterity.' Whence it appears that although the promises to Abraham and his seed, and through them to the world, were absolute, yet Abraham's conduct forms an essential part of the plan. It was by a suitable system of means that the predicted end was to be brought about.—We cannot fail to perceive in this language in what high esteem family-religion is held by God and should be held by us. The honourable testimony which is here borne by the Most High himself to the character of Abraham, rests mainly on the ground of his foreseen exemplary performance of the duties of a father and a master. It was this pre-eminently which God saw and knew and acknowledged in Abraham, that he would use his influence in these relations aright; that he would not only advise and counsel his children and household



in the ways of God, confirming his teachings by his own pious example, but he would command as a master, when he failed to influence as a father. Although it be admitted that a stern and despotic enforcement of religious duties upon the young, whether children or domestics, usually tends to evil, yet occasions will arise when parental authority must accompany parental prayers and precepts, if we would walk in the steps of faithful Abraham. As influence of whatever kind is a sort of delegated power with which God is pleased to invest us for his glory, it should be carefully exercised for the upholding and promoting his interests in the world. In particular, every thing that dishonours God, no less than that which is injurious to society, must be opposed with determined vigour. The violation of the Sabbath, the neglect of public worship, and all kinds of profaneness must be discountenanced in the most positive and peremptory manner. Parents and heads of families are bound to see to the moral deportment of all who are committed to their charge. They should feel a responsibility on the score of their spiritual and eternal interests. The economy of the household should be so ordered as to carry the conviction to their minds that the knowledge, the love, and the service of God is the great business of life, to which every thing else is to be subservient. We should aim to make known to them 'the way of the Lord,' and especially the way in which they may find acceptance with him in the last day. With this view their attendance upon the instituted ordinances of religion should be an object of special solicitude and inculcation. We should inquire from time to time into their knowledge of divine things, and their progress in the heavenly road. How many alas, are they who never employ their influence as heads of families at all for God, or who

do it only in a tame, timid, and ineffectual way? They may perhaps occasionally give their children and domestics good advice. But of how much account is that? Abraham did not satisfy himself with giving good advice to his household, but he 'commanded them.' He maintained authority in his family and exercised that authority for God. God saw that Eli reasoned and expostulated with his children, and that in a manner which at the present day many would consider as abundantly serious and severe;—'Nay, my sons, this is no good report that I hear of you: ye make the Lord's people to transgress.' He even went further and reminded them of the day of judgment;—'If one man sin against another the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?' But he still failed of his duty, and God cut off both him and his family, 'because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' God saw that the guilt and usurpation of Adonijah lay at the door of David, his too fond and indulgent parent;—'His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?' And thus too, by some severe and heart-rending judgment will the delinquency of Christian parents be apt to be visited. True it is, that though we may command, we cannot ensure obedience to our commands; and in spite of our utmost efforts, there may be much amiss among those under our control. In Abraham's family there was a mocking Ishmael, in Isaac's a profane Esau, and in Jacob's many a sinful character. But for our encouragement the inspired declaration, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,' will hold, if not as a *universal*, yet at least as a *general* truth. At all events, signal benefits will accrue to those who are brought up in the fear of God. Innumerable evils, which under

20 And the LORD said, Because <sup>a</sup> the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,

21 <sup>a</sup> I will go down now, and

<sup>z</sup> ch. 4. 10. & 19. 13. Jam. 5. 4. a ch. 11. 5. Exod. 3. 8.

a different education would have ensued, are prevented, and good habits are, for a time, at least, induced. And though afterwards the force of temptation may prevail to draw them aside from the good way, yet in a season of distress they may be brought to reflection, and the seed long buried in the earth may spring up, and as in the case of the prodigal son, bring forth fruit to their eternal welfare. The advantages of a father's house may be forgotten for a season; but in a day of adversity they may be remembered, and he that was lost may be found, and he that was dead be made alive. Let us then earnestly aspire to the commendation here bestowed upon Abraham. Let us aim at securing the same high testimony, so that God may say respecting each of us, 'I know him; I know his principles; he regards all that he possesses, his power, his health, his learning, his influence, as a talent committed to him by me, to be improved for the good of others and the glory of my name. I know his practice. He calls his family together from day to day, to unite in worshipping and serving me. He catechizes his children; he instructs his servants; he labours steadily and affectionately to guide them all into the way of peace. His heart is set upon these things; he enters into them as one who feels his responsibility, and has no wish but to approve himself to me, and to give up a good account of his stewardship at last.' Let us thus aim to be like Abraham in this world, that we may be numbered among his children in the world to come.

20, 21. *And the Lord said—I will go down, &c.* Rather, 'for the Lord had

see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, <sup>b</sup> I will know.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. 8. 2. & 13. 3. Josh. 22. 22. Luke 16. 15. 2 Cor. 11.

said;' i. e. had said in his heart, had purposed. Descent here is of course but figuratively ascribed to God. There could be no change of place with him who is everywhere present; nor can examination be necessary to the eye of Omniscience. The language merely represents God as employing those means of investigation which are necessary to man to declare that all the acts of his vengeance are in perfect conformity to justice, and that he never punishes without the clearest reason. And surely if any thing can show unwillingness to punish, or a desire to see every thing in the most favourable light, or an anxiety like that of a tender parent to cleave to the last hope that his child is not irrecoverably lost; we have it in these words. It is speaking of God indeed according to the manner of men, but it implies that he would look into the whole case; that he would be slow before he came to the resolution to inflict vengeance to the uttermost; that he would institute a careful inquiry to see whether what he knew to be bad, was incurably bad. In a word, it implies that if there was any possibility, consistently with justice, of sparing that devoted city, he stood ready, in heart and mind, to do it. If we rightly apprehend the drift of the whole narrative, vs. 20, 21, are inserted by way of parenthesis, in order to acquaint the reader with the main design for which the Lord, with his two accompanying angels, had descended and made this visit to Abraham. On any other interpretation it is not easy to understand the propriety of the expression, v. 21, 'I will go down,' when he had actually 'come down' already.

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.

c ch. 19. l. d ver. 1.

23 ¶ And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

e Heb. 10. 22. f Numb. 16. 22. 2 Sam. 24. 17.

—¶ *The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah.* The sense given to this phraseology by some commentators, making the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah merely equivalent to the fame or report of their wickedness, is certainly altogether too frigid to answer to the emphatic nature of the expression. It is the very metaphor used by God in addressing Cain, 'the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me.' But the language is by no means exclusively appropriated to the horrid crime of murder. It is applicable to every sin as expressive of the moral demand which it makes for punishment, for every sin has a voice of crimination against the sinner, and its crying intimates the fixed, necessary, and righteous connection, Gen. 4. 10, which is established between transgression and punishment. Thus, James, 5. 4, 'The hire of the labourers kept of you back by fraud crieth, and the cry of the reapers entereth into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth.' Sins however are more especially said to cry when they are peculiarly heinous, flagrant, aggravated, and calculated to provoke the wrath of God; and such were now the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, which two cities are doubtless mentioned for their pre-eminence in crime, though it is clear from Deut. 29. 22—24, that several other cities in the immediate vicinity were involved in the same destruction. —¶ *Their sin is very grievous.* Heb. מִאֲדָה כְּבֹדָה *very heavy*. 'Such as the very ground groans under; the axle-tree of the earth is ready to break under it. Sin is a burden to God, Am. 2. 13. It was so to Christ; he fell to the ground when he was in his agony.

It was so to the angels, who sunk into hell under it. It was so to the Sodomites; they were so clogged with the superfluity of naughtiness, that God came from heaven to give their land a vomit.' Trapp.—¶ *Whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it.* Heb. עָשָׂה כְּלָה *have done or made to a consummation or completion*, or as is not inaptly rendered in our version, 'have done altogether.' Others give it a little different shade of meaning, and render 'have made a full end;' i. e. whether they have filled the measure of their iniquities, whether they have carried their sins to the utmost height of enormity, so that they can be spared no longer; for 'sin where it is finished bringeth forth death.' The language shows, at any rate, the determination of the divine mind to institute the most rigid scrutiny into the facts of the case and to act only upon clear and indubitable evidence. ¶ *And if not, I will know.* Chal. 'But if they repent, I will not take vengeance.'

22. *The men turned their faces from thence.* That is, the two before spoken of. A more accurate rendering would be 'had turned,' and instead of 'went' in the next clause, 'had gone.' Abraham after going with them some distance, returned into the presence of the Lord, where the ensuing interview took place. ¶ *Stood yet before the Lord.* Gr. ἐπὶ τῷ προσώπῳ *was yet standing*. Chal. 'Stood in prayer before the Lord.'

23. *Abraham drew near, and said, &c.* Targ. Jon. 'And Abraham prayed and said,' as if his 'drawing near' was not merely in a way of local approxi-

24 \* Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt

g Jer. 5. 1.

mation, but also of holy fervency and importunity in prayer. In Heb. 10. 22, James 4. 8, the corresponding Gr. term (εγκύζω) has the same meaning. And here commences the most remarkable instance of human intercession to be met with in the whole compass of revelation, one in which the tender and sympathizing benevolence of Abraham on the one hand, and the astonishing clemency and forbearance of Jehovah on the other, are portrayed in colours such as the pencil of inspiration alone could present. The mind of the patriarch would naturally be deeply impressed with the annunciation given above. He would feel for his reckless and ungodly neighbours, over whom such a tremendous doom was impending; but especially for Lot and other righteous men whom he might hope would be found among them. In these circumstances it might indeed be expected that he would stand in the gap, and do all that in him lay to avert the evil coming upon them. But that God should have been so condescending to his prayers, and yielded one concession after another till the number was reduced from fifty to five, could not have been anticipated by human reason. But the depths of the divine mercies are not to be fathomed by the scanty line of our feeble faculties, and we can only stand on the shore of this great ocean and wonder and adore. ¶ *Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?* The question here proposed is not to be understood as implying any settled doubt in the mind of Abraham whether the righteous might not be in danger of being destroyed with the wicked. His previous knowledge of the true attributes of Jehovah, we may well suppose, would have precluded any serious apprehension on this score,

thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

and yet, as no reservation or exemption was spoken of in the announcement itself, there might have been a momentary inward misgiving which was sufficient to prompt the humble and reverential inquiry of the text. As a general principle, we certainly run no hazard in maintaining that in the distribution of rewards and punishments, the Judge of all the earth will do right. At the same time it cannot be questioned, that in those judgments which befall communities in the ordinary course of God's providence, the good and the bad are often alike involved. Thus the calamities of war, pestilence, earthquake, fire, &c. fall upon the righteous as well as the wicked. In such cases we are to look forward to the retributions of another world for a complete vindication of the ways of Providence. There the sufferings of the righteous in this world, in which however even here they experience no more than their sins deserve, will be abundantly compensated. But we may suppose that Abraham here speaks rather of such miraculous and extraordinary judgments as are immediately inflicted by the hand of God for the punishment of some crying sins, and as a warning to a heedless world to avoid the like provocations. Such was the awful visitation which God now intended to bring upon Sodom, and to which Abraham refers. In this case it might reasonably be expected from the justice of God that he would put a difference between the righteous and the wicked. Thus in like manner in view of the threatened destruction of Korah and his company, Numb. 16. 19—22, Moses and Aaron 'fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?' And on this oc-

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and <sup>h</sup> that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the LORD said, <sup>k</sup> If I

<sup>h</sup> Joh. 8. 20. Isai. 3. 10, 11. <sup>i</sup> Job. 8. 3. & 34. 17. Ps. 58. 11. & 94. 2. Rom. 3. 6. <sup>k</sup> Jer. 5. 1. Ezek. 22. 30.

casion an exemption was granted to all such as would avail themselves of it, v. 26, for command was given by Moses to the congregation, saying, 'Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.' Comp. 2 Sam. 24. 17. Ps. 11. 4-7.

24. *Peradventure there be fifty righteous.* Abraham charitably hopes the best with respect to the number of the righteous even in Sodom. At this the outset of his intercession, he certainly considered it as at least a possible case, that there might be found in that wicked place fifty righteous, and though in this instance he was sadly mistaken, yet his example teaches us the propriety of entertaining the most charitable hopes, even in the midst of the worst appearances. From facts elsewhere recorded in the sacred volume, we learn that God still had a remnant to serve him in times of general apostacy, even though they were unknown to his own servants; and we are perhaps warranted to believe that although in regard to particular places the number of the righteous may be less than we suppose, yet in the world at large it is much greater.—π

*Wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place?* From the question proposed by Abraham in the preceding verse, it would appear that he contemplated the preservation of the righteous only, without presuming to hope for the deliverance of the wicked for their

find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And Abraham answered and said, <sup>l</sup> Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which *am* <sup>m</sup> but dust and ashes:

<sup>l</sup> Luke 18. 1. <sup>m</sup> ch. 3. 19. <sup>j</sup> v. 4. 19. Eccles. 12. 7. <sup>i</sup> Cor. 15. 47, 48. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 5. 1.

sakes. But pondering farther upon the subject, his benevolent feelings, together with his conviction of the divine clemency, seem to have prompted him to widen the scope of his intercession, and to sue for the sparing of the guilty for the sake of the innocent part of the population. For their own sakes he would not venture to offer the petition. In this we see the working of a pious heart, which is continually prone to enlarge its desires, and like the horse-leech's daughter to cry, 'Give, give.' Like the four things that are never satisfied—the grave, the barren womb, the thirsty earth, and the fire—'it saith not, it is enough.'

25. *That be far from thee to do.*

Heb. הללה *halilah*; a term expressing detestation of a thing as *profane*, *abominable*, *shocking*, and consequently that which was *forbidden to be done*. It is rendered in the Sept. by μη γενοιτο *let it not be*, or by μηδαμως *by no means*, and in Job, 27. 5, μη ειη *be it not*. In all the parallel New Testament texts, the Gr. is uniformly μη γενοιτο, and the Eng. version 'God forbid.'

28. *Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous, &c.* If it be asked why Abraham continued thus to press his suit abating the number by five till at length he had reduced it down to ten, the answer perhaps may be, that being in the outset uncertain as to the number of righteous in Sodom, the readiness and facility of Jehovah in yielding to his first petition, inspired a



28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of five*? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

30 And he said *unto him*, Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

doubt whether the specified fifty could be found. This doubt would naturally be increased by every successive concession, each one of which paved the way for the following, till at length he probably deemed it both hopeless and presumptuous to proceed any farther. Yet who can affirm that one step farther in the reduction might not have secured the salvation of Sodom? The inquiry is not perhaps profitable or decorous, but certain it is that on a subsequent occasion, when God was about to send the Jews into captivity, Jer. 5. 1, he told them that if they could find one righteous man in Jerusalem, he would spare them all; and after he had inflicted his judgments upon them, he assigned as his reason for it, Ezek. 22. 30, 31, that not one had been found to stand in the gap, and intercede for them. But on the other hand, it must be admitted that God holds the prerogative of pardoning in a sovereign manner, and will not allow himself to be bound by his own precedent. The clemency which would have spared Sodom for the sake of ten could not be moved on any account to avert the threatened wrath from the city which had rejected the Saviour, Matt. 11. 24,

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

32 And he said, ° Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. ° And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.

33 And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

n Judg. 6. 39. ° James 5. 16.

and the iniquities of a people may arrive at such a pitch that if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, those holy men should not prevail except to deliver their own souls by their righteousness, Ezek. 14. 14. It is not to be forgotten therefore that notwithstanding the amazing condescension of God manifested on this and other occasions to the prayers of his saints, there is a limit beyond which their intercessions will not avail.

33. *And the Lord went his way, &c.* Rather, Heb. *וַיֵּלֶךְ* *went away*; which implies that he was one of the three persons who had come to Abraham. Chal. 'The glory of the Lord was lifted up.'—¶ *Unto his place*; i. e. to the grove of Mamre, where he was now residing.

REMARKS.—The above narrative of Abraham's intercession teaches us, (1.) *How highly God esteems the righteous, and what blessings they are to the places in which they live.* They are well termed the 'light of the world' and the 'salt of the earth,' for without them the world would be immersed in total darkness, and speedily become one mass of corruption. Little do the world think how much they are indebted to God's

people. If only ten persons of this character had been found in Sodom it would have been spared. Good men are the safeguards of a nation. Though often traduced and represented as the 'troublers of Israel,' yet were they viewed aright they would be considered rather as the 'shields of the earth,' who ward off from it the judgments of the Almighty, and their removal would be mourned as a public calamity. 'When Lot is taken out of Sodom, Sodom is taken out of the world.' *Trapp.*

(2.) *The humility which ought to characterise our addresses to God.* Nothing more distinguishes the prayer of Abraham on this occasion than the profound abasement of spirit which breathes through it. He speaks as one who can hardly realize that he has taken it upon him to speak at all. Under the same oppressive consciousness of our being but sinful dust and ashes should we draw near to God. It is only when the awe of the divine majesty and purity falls upon us, and we are filled with an overwhelming sense of our own unworthiness and vileness, and of the vast distance that separates us from God, that we can suitably approach him. But if duly penetrated with these emotions, we need not fear that he will be angry with us, or that our humble, compassionate, and fervent petitions will fail of acceptance. Moreover, let us remember for our consolation and encouragement, while thus abased with the sense of our ill-desert, that we have a High Priest within the vail, whose merits countervail our demerits, and who will present our poor petitions at the throne of his Father; who will do more than this—who will intercede for us as Abraham never could; for the intercession of Jesus cannot weary, his petitions cannot fail. How comforting, how delightful a thought to the true believer! Abraham's intercession, with all his fervency, could only avail to save devoted Sodom in

case ten righteous men had been found in it. Our glorious Intercessor has availed to save ten thousand times ten thousand of the guilty progeny of Adam, though not one righteous man has been found throughout all their generations.

3. *The astonishing efficacy of intercessory prayer, and the duty which rests upon us of offering it.* It appears from the present narrative that Abraham left off asking before God left off granting; and though the particular object of his petitions was not accorded to him, yet the avowed conditions on which it would have been granted show that no limits, but such as a concern for his own honour induced God to fix, can be assigned to the exercise of his grace in answer to his people's prayers. It was in fact a *virtual* obtaining of the object of his suit. How diligently then should the pious improve their interest in behalf of others! We can scarcely conceive a person so obdurate, but that if, by speaking to another, he could obtain health for the sick or relief for the indigent, he would avail himself of such an opportunity to benefit his fellow-creatures. Yet, alas! what backwardness among Christians to the work of intercession! How silent, how cold, how indifferent, while an awful mass of ignorance, wretchedness, and impiety, surrounds them on every side! Shall Abraham be thus fervent, thus anxious in behalf of a guilty city by whose destruction he could in no way have been injured, while we sit unconcerned in the midst of perishing parents, children, brethren, and friends? Let us stir ourselves up to this good work. Let us consider how much we ourselves need the prayers of others, and from this let us judge of the claims of others upon us. Let us consider also that to neglect to pray for others is to sin against God, 1 Sam. 12. 23; and that if we have no heart to sigh and cry for the abominations or miseries of others,

## CHAPTER XIX.

**A**ND there <sup>a</sup>came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and <sup>b</sup>Lot, seeing *them*, rose up to meet them; and bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

a ch. 18. 22. b ch. 18. 1, &c.

we have great reason to fear and tremble for ourselves.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1. *And there came two angels to Sodom.* Rather according to the literal rendering of the Heb. **וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי מַלְאָכִים** *and there came two of the angels, or the two angels*; i. e. two of the three spoken of in the previous chapter, and there called men. While the Angel-Jehovah remained communing with Abraham, the other two went on their way till they came to Sodom. — **¶ And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.**

The gates of cities were anciently the chief places of general resort for the citizens where they assembled not only to confer upon public affairs, and to hold their courts of justice, but also for the sake of social intercourse and pleasant recreation. Indeed it appears from 2 Kings, 7. 1, 18, that markets were sometimes held in their gates, which would naturally bring together a concourse of people, and it is remarked by travellers that the modern Arabs and other Orientals are exceedingly addicted to flocking together to their markets and fairs for the sake of society and amusement. As to the passage before us, the Jewish commentators understand the phrase 'sitting in the gate,' as implying the exercise of authority as a magistrate; and if we suppose, as is highly probable, that in those primitive times the 'elders' of cities and villages were the acknowledged judges in civil affairs in virtue of their age, and without any

2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, <sup>c</sup>turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and <sup>d</sup>wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, <sup>e</sup>Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

c Heb. 13. 2. d ch. 18. 4. e Luke 24. 28.

special formalities of appointment, the supposition is perhaps not ill-founded. Certain it is that in the book of Job, which contains so many striking pictures of patriarchal times, the phrase is used in that sense; ch. 27. 7—12, 'When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, &c.—I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him;' i. e. I did this judicially. Lot was now an aged man and a resident of long standing in Sodom, and might with other elders have sustained this character, though it would appear from v. 9, that he was too good a man to have been a popular magistrate. — **¶ And Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them, &c.** Lot, like Abraham, was 'upon hospitable thoughts intent,' and with the ready courtesy which is ever prompted by a pious heart, he rises and goes forth to meet the approaching strangers, and to tender to them the welcome and the attentions of a generous host; thus exemplifying the language of Job, ch. 31. 32, 'The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller.'

2. *Behold now, my lords, turn in, &c.* Heb. **וַיִּבֹרֵךְ אֲדֹנָי** *Adonai*; a word frequently applied as a title of the Most High, although in such cases distinguished by a different mode of vowel-pointing. The absence of inns in eastern countries (except the caravanserais, where shelter alone is provided), both in ancient and modern times renders such an invitation as Lot's a custom-

3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

f ch. 18. 8.

any civility under similar circumstances. But for such a proffer of entertainment in private houses, strangers often pass the night in the open squares of cities, which in that warm climate is attended with little inconvenience. —¶ *Nay, but he will abide in the street all night.* They at first refuse, as if it were accounted as great a mark of civility on the part of strangers not to seem forward in accepting, as it was on his to be forward in inviting. The reply is to be construed, not as a deliberate violation of truth, but as the language of common etiquette on such occasions, and as expressing their present purpose, *unless* they should be further importuned by Lot; in that case, their words would not be understood to preclude the liberty of complying. Our Saviour's language, Luke, 24. 28, 29, affords a striking parallel to their refusal. The answer of the angels, moreover, was better calculated to put to the test and make manifest the sincerity and kindness of Lot's disposition. By acting as if they deemed it safe to lodge in the streets, while they knew the contrary to be true, they gave a fair opportunity to Lot to show how unfeigned was his concern for their security, while at the same time the intimations from him of the danger to be apprehended would go to disclose the aggravated wickedness of the place, and justify the judgment about to be inflicted.

3. *He pressed upon them greatly.* Heb. וַיִּצְרֵם בְּסָמָאֵר and he was exceedingly urgent upon them. Not merely from an impulse of generosity, that he might refresh them with the cheer of his house, or from a wish to

4 ¶ But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

enjoy their company and converse, but because he was too well aware of the danger to which they would be exposed, were they to adhere to their declared purpose of lodging in the street. The Heb. term implies an earnestness of importunity almost amounting to violence, and is in fact the very same word that occurs v. 9, 'And they pressed sore upon the man,' which cannot perhaps be better rendered. Its Gr. representative is *κατεβασατο*, a synonyme with which is employed in a similar connection, Luke, 24. 29, 'But they constrained (*κατεβασαυτο*) him saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.' —¶ *He made them a feast.* Heb. מִשְׁתֶּה a drinking, a banquet. Gr. *πορον* id. rendered in Est. 5. 6.—7. 7, a 'banquet of wine.' Comp. Est. 7. 1, 2.—3. 15; so called from that which constituted the principal part of the entertainment. This was customary in those days, and on similar occasions, and is not to be judged of by those rules of abstinence from every exciting beverage which pious and benevolent men in modern times have felt constrained to adopt under a state of society altogether different, and in view of evils which have made a course of rigid abstinence absolutely imperative on their consciences. —¶ *Did bake unleavened bread.* Because this could be more expeditiously prepared than any thing else of the kind.

4. *And before they lay down, &c.* While the little party were thus innocently refreshing and enjoying themselves under the hospitable roof of Lot, the characteristic baseness of the

5 <sup>g</sup> And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? <sup>h</sup> bring them out unto us, that we <sup>i</sup> may know them.

6 And <sup>k</sup> Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

<sup>g</sup> Isai. 3. 9. <sup>h</sup> Judg. 19. 22. <sup>i</sup> ch. 4. 1. Rom. 1. 24. 27. Jude 7. <sup>k</sup> Judg. 19. 23.

abandoned Sodomites soon began to betray itself. They beset the house, not for the purpose of robbing or insulting them in any of the ordinary modes of violence or outrage, which had been had enough, especially to strangers, but to perpetrate a species of crime too shocking and detestable to be named; a species of crime which indeed has no name given it in the Scriptures, but what is borrowed from this infamous place, Lev. 18. 22. However we might wish, for the honour of human nature, that this shameful vice had perished from the earth together with the cities of the plain, yet the severe prohibitory laws of Moses imply that it was practised in his day, and history unblushingly records it as prevalent in the best days of Greece and Rome. Rom 1. 24—27. In like manner we have melancholy evidence from the penal codes of modern times that it is not extinct, as the British law makes it punishable with death.—¶ *All the people from every quarter.* Heb. מִכָּצֵה from the extremity, i. e. from every extremity of the city; correctly rendered in our version. This circumstance shows in the most impressive light the unparalleled corruption that had infected all orders, ranks, and ages of the inhabitants of Sodom. The signal had but to be given, and the universal mass of the population were ready at once to flock together to any scene of riot and debauchery! Had they had any useful occupations to follow, were they

7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

8 <sup>l</sup> Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes; only unto these men do nothing; <sup>m</sup> for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

<sup>l</sup> Judg. 19. 24. <sup>m</sup> ch. 18. 5.

not completely sunk in profligate idleness, they could not all have found time thus suddenly to rendezvous for deeds of iniquity. But from the peculiar emphasis of the language it would seem that there were no exceptions. Sodom was full of Sodomites. What must have been the extent of its abominations, when the aged, instead of restraining the young, were actually urging them forward in the course of iniquity by their own pernicious example! But every thing tended to illustrate the justice of the judgment which was fast ripening for execution against them.

5. *Called.* That is, with a loud voice; demanded vociferously; which was virtually *proclaiming* their own shame. In allusion to the circumstances mentioned in this verse, the prophet says of Jerusalem, Is. 3. 9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.' Compare the similar instance of enormous wickedness recorded Judg. 19. 22, &c.

6. *Went out at the door.* The original here, as in v. 11, employs two distinct words for 'door;' the one פֶּתַח *pethah* signifying the aperture, passage, or doorway, through which ingress and egress were made, the other דֶּלֶת *deleth* denoting the leaf of the door, hung upon hinges, by which the aperture was closed. The distinction is very accurately preserved throughout the subsequent narrative, v. 9, 10, 11.

7, 8. *And said, I pray you, brethren,*



&c. The conduct of Lot on this trying occasion was in many respects praiseworthy. He seems to have been struck with horror at the thoughts of the violation of the laws of hospitality, and his shutting the door after him expressed how delicately he felt for his guests. It was saying in effect, 'Let not their ears be offended with what passes without; whatever is scurrilous, obscene, or abusive, let me hear it but not them.' His gentle and respectful manner of treating this worst of mobs, is also worthy of notice. Though he could have entertained no respect for them on the score of character, yet he forebore the use of opprobrious terms. Recognising in them his fellow creatures and near neighbours, he calls them *brethren*, if perchance by such conciliatory language he may gain their ear and eventually dissuade them from their wicked purpose. (See 1 Sam. 30. 23. Is. 58. 7. Acts 17. 26.) But when, to turn off their attention from his guests, he proposes to bring out and surrender his daughters to their pleasure, he hints at an expedient which can by no means be justified. It is not for us to have recourse to one evil in the hope of preventing a greater; but rather to consent to no evil. His regard to the rites of hospitality was indeed commendable, but having used all proper means of preserving his guests, he ought to have left the event to God. It is possible indeed that owing to the excessive perturbation of his mind he was scarcely master of his words or actions, and that some excuse may be suggested for him on this score; but in all probability if he had never lived in Sodom nor become familiarized to their profligate manners he would not have made such a proposal. As it was he evidently gained nothing by it, but an increased measure of abuse; and even his gentle remonstrance was perversely construed into obtrusive and officious meddling, as if he had or would set

himself up for a *judge*, who was merely a *sojourner* among them. Persuasion has no force with men who are under the dominion of their lusts, and nothing is more common than for kind admonitions and faithful rebukes to be attributed to unmannerly and arrogant dictation. So Lot's endeavours to restrain these desperate Sodomites from the commission of iniquity was taken in evil part, their resentment was inflamed against him, they thirsted for revenge, and not content with having the men brought out, they will go in unto them, and break the door open to effect their purpose!—¶ *For therefore came they under my roof.* Gr. 'Under the covering of my beams or rafters.' The meaning is, that they entered his house on the ground of the understood condition that their persons should be safe, that the sacredness of the laws of hospitality should protect them. Together with this, the words probably carry an implication that a special providence had conducted them to his dwelling, and that any allowed violence towards his guests would not only be a most flagrant injury to them, but an act of gross treachery and disobedience towards God who had, for the time being, intrusted their persons to his keeping. As it would seem from the language of Abraham in the preceding chapter, v. 5, that the opportunities afforded for entertaining strangers were regarded as *providential*, and as carrying the force of a direct command of heaven to that effect, Lot no doubt suggested as strong an argument as he could have used, when he said, 'For therefore have they come under the shadow of my roof.' It was appealing to their own knowledge of the awful sanctity with which the laws of hospitality were invested. But with that abandoned population this plea, like every other, was unavailing.

9. *This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge.*

9 And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one fellow <sup>u</sup> came in to sojourn, <sup>o</sup> and he will needs be a judge: Now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.

n 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. o Exod. 2. 14.

Heb. ירשט שפט *judging he will judge*. The point of the reproach lies in charging Lot with the audacity of opposing himself, a single individual, to the will of the majority, the multitude of the citizens, and thus, though no more than a foreigner arrogantly taking it upon him, to act the part of a judge, as if he would hold the whole city at his beck. At the same time, it would perhaps be doing no violence to the words to suppose the charge to have been grounded on the fact of his having *formerly* officiated as judge among them, and in that character rebuked or punished their flagitious conduct. It admits of a doubt, at any rate, whether the term is predicated of what he said or did on this occasion merely.

10. *The men put forth their hand, &c.* God's people are safe when angels stand sentries at their doors. Moses again calls the heavenly messengers by a name indicative not of what they *were*, but of what they *seemed*; for although they now began to put forth a superhuman power, they had not yet revealed themselves as ministers sent from heaven. The incident here related of them teaches us that though God, in his deep wisdom, often sees fit to defer, till his people are brought into the most trying straits, the aid which he purposes to afford, yet he will not fail them in the last extremity. Lot was made to feel his extremity before the needed succour was vouchsafed him, but as he had kindly and generously opened his doors for

10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

11 And they smote the men <sup>p</sup> that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

p 2 Kings 6. 18. Acts. 13. 11.

the reception of God's messengers, as he had recognised a special providence in their being sent within the sphere of his hospitality, and as he had exposed himself to great perils in their defence, the Most High would not leave him without a witness of his guardian care. By this seasonable interference he reminds us how calmly we may resign ourselves to the custody of an ever watchful providence while engaged in the way of duty, and how intrepidly we may face dangers and enemies while following that 'which right is.'

11. *Smote the men—with blindness.* Heb. בסוררים *bassanverim, with dazzled blindnesses*, pl. Gr. ἀπατία *with a not-seeing*, Chal. 'With fatuity of vision.' Syr. 'With illusions.' The original occurs only here and 2 Kings, 16. 18, where a similar effect appears to have been produced upon the Syrian army in answer to the prayer of Elisha. The judgment undoubtedly consisted, not in a total privation of sight, in which case they would of course have desisted from the assault on Lot, and endeavoured to make their way home, but in a confused vision, such as is occasioned by vertigo of the brain, in which objects swim before the eyes, and mock every attempt to approach or seize them. It was an effect upon their vision that prevented their seeing any thing distinctly or steadily, or in its right place. In this utter confusion of the senses they wearied themselves in seeking for what they deemed a door, but which was

12 ¶ And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, <sup>a</sup> bring *them* out of this place :

q ch. 7. 1. 2 Pet. 2. 7, 9.

merely a phantasm of the imagination. The miracle was as great as if they had been suddenly struck stone-blind; for seeing they saw not; with open eyes they were unable to receive any true impressions from the external world. Yet they madly persisted in their object, when heaven had made them impotent to effect it, and with iron obstinacy continue to war with omnipotence. 'Many a one is hardened by the good word of God, and, instead of receiving the counsel, rages at the messenger: when men are grown to that pass, that they are no whit better by afflictions, and worse with admonitions, God finds it time to strike. Now Lot's guests begin to show themselves angels, and first delivered Lot in Sodom, then from Sodom; first strike them with blindness, whom they will after consume with fire. How little did the Sodomites think that vengeance was so near them! While they went groping in the streets, and cursing those whom they could not find, Lot with the angels is in secure light, and sees them miserable, and foresees them burning. It is the use of God, to blind and besot those whom he means to destroy.' *Bp. Hall*. The same infatuated conduct, says Calvin, is still exemplified by men of reprobate minds, whom Satan fascinates with such strong delusion, that, though smitten by the mighty hand of God, they still, with stupid impetuosity, rush against him. Yet the awful lesson of God's most tremendous rebukes of unhallowed lustings is lost upon multitudes, who with their eyes open to the consequen-

13 For we will destroy this place, because the <sup>r</sup> cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and <sup>s</sup> the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

r ch. 18. 20. s 1 Chron. 21. 15.

ces cease not to press forward in the same destructive career.

12. *Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, &c.* At length the angels announced the object of their errand. In this verse they read to Lot their commission. The last high handed enormity of the Sodomites proclaimed their sins no longer tolerable. But the information is given to Lot not merely that he may be assured of the justice and equity of God in punishing his incorrigible enemies, but also in order that he might be 'moved with fear' to make good his escape from the devoted city. Here we are to mark the mercy of the divine proceedings. Ten righteous men would have saved the city; but there seems to have been only one. He however shall at all events escape; and not only so, but all that belong to him shall be delivered for his sake; or if otherwise, it shall be their own fault. It shall not be for the want of a proffered opportunity or a faithful warning. Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or whatever he had are directed to be brought out of the doomed city, which was rapidly approaching the crisis of its fate. That remarkable feature of the divine administration by which the wicked are blessed for the sake of the righteous is here most signally illustrated; for that such were the sons-in-law is evident from the contemptuous manner in which they received the warning, and the fact that they perished in the perdition of the city. See note on Gen. 7. 1.—Probably a more correct rendering of the clause is, 'Hast thou any

14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, 'which married his daughters, and said, "Up, get you out of this place;

t Matt. 1. 18. u Num. 16. 21, 45.

here besides? son-in-law, or thy sons, or thy daughters.'

13. *We will destroy this place.* Heb.

מַשְׁחָרִים *we are corrupting*; i. e. about to corrupt or destroy; just upon the eve of destroying—often the force of the present participle. For this sense of the word 'corrupt' see Note on Gen. 6. 13. In the subsequent narrative, v. 24, 25, the destruction of the city is indeed referred more directly to the agency of Jehovah himself, but the angels say, 'We will destroy it,' both because they had been sent to announce it, and because they were to be associated in the work of destruction.

14. *Which married his daughters.*

Heb. לִקְחָ בְּנָתָיו *the takers of his daughters, or who were taking*; i. e. who were about to take or marry; who were betrothed to his daughters, and upon the point of consummating their nuptials; called therefore 'sons-in-law' by anticipation. Chal 'Who were about to take.' The Greek, however, unlike all the other versions, renders it εἰληφορας *had taken*. If this be correct, then some of Lot's daughters perished in the conflagration, for the two who alone escaped were maidens that had not known men. Some countenance is given to this idea by the purport of v. 15, on which see note.—¶ *Up, get you out of this place, &c.* The warning given by Lot was abrupt and pointed, such as implied a peculiar urgency in the case, and one which would admit of no delay. Still it is not necessary to suppose that this was *all* he said to them. As it would give additional force to his warnings to cite the authority on which they were uttered, we can hardly doubt that he related to them all the circum-

stances of the visit of the strangers, how he had learnt that they were angels, and the announcement which they had made to him of the object of their coming to Sodom. But the drift of the whole was an immediate escape from the impending wrath; and it would seem that if they had any respect for Lot, or reposed any confidence in his words they could not but have been deeply impressed to see him coming to their houses at an unwonted hour of the night and with a countenance and manner full of solemnity relating to them what had happened, and earnestly exhorting them not to be

x Ex. 9. 21. Luke 17. 23. & 24. 11.

'disobedient to the heavenly vision!' But alas! he was destined to meet a disheartening reception. A judicial infatuation had seized upon them: they closed their ears against his warnings, and even set them down to the account of a distempered imagination or a dissembled merriment!—¶ *He seemed as one that mocked.* As one who was not in earnest; one that was in jest, exciting groundless fears in sport. Heb. כִּמְצַחֵק *kematzehak*, the same word from which *Isaac* is derived, and signifying *laughter*. 'He warns them like a prophet, and advises them like a father, but both in vain: he seems to them as if he mocked, and they do more than seem to him to mock again.' *Bp. Hall*. One can almost imagine that he hears them saying, 'What, this entire city to be destroyed. These goodly houses and temples to be overthrown and sink in flames! These active multitudes to perish in a body, and that by such an unheard of judgment as a fire rained down from heaven! Incredible! Impossible! Away

15 ¶ And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, 'Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the

y Numb. 16. 24, 26. Rev. 18. 4.

men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; <sup>a</sup> the LORD being merciful unto him; <sup>b</sup> and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

a Luke 18. 13. Rom. 9. 15, 16. b Ps. 34. 22.

with such childish bugbears! Mere idle whims conjured up in the brain of a weak doting old man! Thus was the awful message of heaven received, or rather rejected, and thus alas! too often is the gospel message spurned and made light of, as if its ministers were playing upon the fears and credulities of their fellow men. Yielding themselves up to a fatal security, they heed not the monitions of the word or the spirit till in too many instances the delusion is dispelled by the fearful reality of a lost soul and a present hell.

15. *And when the morning arose.* That is, at break of day, for the sun did not rise till Lot entered Zoar, v. 23.

—¶ *The angels hastened Lot.* This circumstance shows that the commendable faith and piety of Lot were still mingled with some degree of human infirmity. He was disposed to linger, and had to be hastened by the angels. It is easy indeed to conceive that one in his situation, though prepared on the whole to obey the divine summons, should still have felt a strong repugnance to an instantaneous flight. His was a struggle like that of the endangered mariner who feels that his only chance for escaping shipwreck and saving his life, is to cast all his goods overboard, and yet hesitates and lingers and can scarcely bring himself to part with what he holds so dear. In Lot's case, however, we may have the charity to believe, it was not solely the thought of losing all his worldly substance that made him falter. It was indeed putting his fortitude to a

severe test to know that he must forsake all and go forth homeless and destitute, he knew not whither, and our own habitual practical distrust of Providence enables us but too easily to enter into his feelings, and perhaps to find an apology for them on this score; but this was not the only ground of his reluctance. His heart was agonized at the thought of leaving so many relatives behind him to perish in the perdition of the city; and we may suppose it was mainly in consequence of this strong conflict that he so deferred his flight that his deliverers were at last obliged to have recourse to a kind of violence to hasten his departure. Such, in thousands of instances, is the struggle in the minds of men when called to leave all and flee from the wrath to come. They do not wholly disbelieve or reject the warnings addressed to them; they are convinced that there is peril in their path, and that ere long something must be done to avoid it; an awful sound is ever and anon in their ears, urging them to expedite their flight from the devoted city; but still they linger, and still *would* linger to their final undoing, did not the same compulsory mercy of heaven which rescued Lot, save them also from the consequences of their destructive apathy.—¶ *Thy two daughters which are here.* Heb. *הנמצאות* which are found. Gr. *as exists which thou hast.* Chal. 'Which are found faithful with thee.' The expression seems covertly to imply that some of Lot's daughters were *not* thus found, and consequently



17 ¶ And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, ° Escape for

thy life: <sup>d</sup> look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

c 1 Kings, 19. 3.

d ver. 26. Matt. 24. 16, 17, 18. Luke 9. 62. Phil. 3. 13, 24.

that they perished in the general destruction.—¶ *Lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.* That is, the punishment of the iniquity; akin to which is the common idiom of ‘bearing iniquity’ for ‘suffering punishment,’ Lev. 20. 17—20, Numb. 14. 34.

16. *And while he lingered the men laid hold upon his hand, &c.* Heb.

רַחַמְהֶמָּה *he delayed or distracted himself.* The original is peculiar and emphatic in its import, leading us to fear that it was not altogether a compassionate sympathy that detained his steps. The word properly implies that *he suffered himself to be hindered and embarrassed with distracting cares,* perhaps relative to his property. The same term occurs with a negative in Ps. 119. 60, showing a striking contrast between the promptitude of David and the tardiness of Lot; ‘I made haste, and *delayed not.*’ (Heb. לֹא רַחַמְהֶמָּה *suffered not myself to be delayed,*) to keep thy commandments.’

—¶ *The Lord being merciful unto him.* Heb. בַּחֲמֶלֶת יְיָ עָלָיו *in the gentle mercy of the Lord upon him.* How striking was the divine interposition in his favour! How evident is it that had he been left to himself he would have perished in the general overthrow!

E’en Lot himself could lingering stand,  
When vengeance was in view;

’Twas mercy plucked him by the hand,  
Or he had perished too.

So the general warnings and provisions of the gospel are unavailing to move the sinner’s heart without a special influence of Divine mercy superadded to the outward call. ‘We are all naturally in Sodom: if God did not hale

us out, whilst we linger, we should be condemned with the world. If God meet with a very good field, he pulls up the weeds, and lets the corn grow; if indifferent, he lets the corn and weeds grow together; if very ill, he gathers the few ears of corn, and burns the weeds.’ *Bp. Hall.*

17. *He said, Escape for thy life.* Heb. עַל נַפְשְׁךָ *for thy soul.* Chal. ‘Pity thine own soul, and save thyself,’ &c. It would seem that a new speaker, even the Angel-Jehovah, who had by this time left Abraham and joined the two angels at Sodom, utters these words. The fact indeed of his coming up and joining his angelic companions is not mentioned, but the tenor of the ensuing narrative makes it clear, we think, that the personage called Jehovah was present at the overthrow of Sodom, and that it was no other than he who sustains the character of chief speaker in the discourses recorded. See v. 21, 22. Lot, having been so far saved almost in spite of himself, is now solemnly charged to escape for his life to the mountains without so much as looking behind him. This was continuing to be *mercifully severe*, and such are our Lord’s commands which require us to deny self, take up the cross, and follow him. The extreme earnestness of the angels throughout, and the urgent and imperative tone in which Lot was now addressed, was indeed calculated to inspire him with an awful dread of what was coming, and in the weaker females to extinguish perhaps the powers of reason and reflection. But shall we say that these divine monitors were therefore imperpetually officious or needlessly severe?

Suppose that having received a commission to warn Lot, they had yielded to a mistaken tenderness, and forborne to alarm his fears. Suppose that they had gently admonished him of his danger, and suggested the expediency of providing against it. Suppose that when they saw him lingering, and knew that one hour's delay would involve him and his family in the common ruin, they had contented themselves with hinting in a distant manner that more expedition would be desirable; would such conduct have become them? Would they have acted the part of friends? Yea, would they not have been awfully responsible to God for their unfaithfulness, and considered as chargeable with the death of the family? Assuredly, the more faithful and earnest they were in the discharge of their duty, the more real benevolence they exercised; nor could they have displayed their love in any better way than by seizing hold of them to quicken their pace, and urging them by the most powerful considerations to secure their own safety. In like manner should the earnest appeals and exhortations of Christ's ministers to the impenitent be regarded. They are really prompted by the most benevolent motives. Knowing the terrors of the Lord they endeavour to persuade men. In uttering the denunciations of heaven they may be accused as needlessly harsh or severe, but it is a most unjust imputation, for what they speak will soon be found true, and in thus discharging their duty they perform an office worthy of an angel. They believe God's threatenings and therefore they speak; and should they speak smooth things to their hearers and prophesy deceits, they would prove their bitterest enemies. In this urgent matter concealment is treachery and fidelity is love. They must be an echo to the angel's voice and cry aloud, 'Escape for your lives, look not behind

you, nor tarry in all the plain.'—¶ *Look not behind thee, &c.* Neither thou nor any of the company. That all were included in the prohibition is evident from what befel Lot's wife, though we do not read that it was expressly addressed to her. They were forbidden to look behind them or to tarry in all the plain, not only as a test of obedience—which might have been prescribed them without any other reason than the will of God—but also to express in this manner the utmost possible detestation of the abhorred and devoted city, and a firm resolve to shun all participation in its fate. In order to this they are not to *tarry* (Heb stand) in all the plain; they were not to station themselves at any particular spot with a view to indulge their curiosity in looking back upon the conflagration; for as the impending destruction was not to be confined to the city, but was to extend all over the region of the plain, they could not consequently delay but at the imminent peril of their lives. The extent of the purposed ruin is doubtless now marked by the boundaries of the Dead Sea. Within these limits it was death for them to tarry. With what altered emotions does Lot now survey that ensnaring plain, which had been his great temptation! For many a day he had roved at ease with his flocks and herds over that goodly ground. But now he is to pass over it with the utmost speed—not a moment is to be lost. Fly he must for his life to the mountains beyond, for a deluge of fire is about to break forth and flow over that accursed soil! Ah, how easily can the hand of God turn our choicest worldly comforts into wormwood and gall! How easily can he rob our enjoyments of their zest, and convert our earthly Edens into a dreary waste! 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'—¶ *Escape to the mountain.* Collect. sing. for *mountains*, i. e. the

18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, \* not so my Lord!

19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life: and I cannot

e Acts 10. 14.

mountainous region of Moab, several miles to the east of Sodom.

18, 19. *And Lot said unto them, &c.* It must certainly be set down to the account of a weak and wavering faith in Lot that he now made this request to his divine deliverer. His duty evidently was to have yielded a simple obedience to the declared will of heaven. He should have known that what God dictated was best; that if he had commanded him to go to the mountains, he would certainly enable him to get there, and that he could as well protect him there as any where else. But he is filled with alarm in view of the distance of the mountains, imagining that he will be unable to reach them in time to secure his safety, and therefore pleads hard for permission to flee to the neighbouring city of Zoar, and hopes he may be excused in this desire seeing it was 'a little one;' a reason the force of which probably lay in the implication, that as the city was small its sins were comparatively small, and on this account might be favoured with exemption from the coming calamity. The preferring of such a request in such circumstances we should no doubt suppose would have drawn forth some marked expression of the divine displeasure, and that with a frown the Lord would have repeated the former command. But with characteristic clemency he lends a gracious ear to his petition. His infirmity is not rebuked; his request was granted; the city was spared for his sake. In this God designed at once to show how much the fervent prayer of a righteous man

escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

20 Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one: Oh, let me escape thither! (*is it not a little one?*) and my soul shall live.

avails, and at the same time by the result to teach his short-sighted servant how much wiser a part he would have acted had he confided in a child-like manner in God, and fled to the mountains in the first instance. For it is clear from the sequel, v. 30, that his terror would not suffer him to remain in the place he had chosen, but that he was soon glad to take refuge in the very mountains which he had foolishly declined to seek. This instance should fix firmly in our minds the conviction that we can never gain any thing by attempting to improve upon God's appointments. He will choose for us infinitely better than we can for ourselves. Let us learn, moreover, another lesson from this incident. If a petition marked and marred with such faultiness as that of Lot on this occasion still met with a favourable hearing, what efficacy may we conceive to pertain to those prayers which are prompted by a yet more believing spirit and framed more distinctly in accordance with the revealed will of heaven?—¶ *Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight.* 'Nothing can be more common than this form of speech. Has a man been pleading with another and succeeded in his request, he will say, 'Ah, since I have found favour in your sight, let me mention another thing.' 'My lord, had I not found favour in your sight, who would have helped me?' 'Happy is the man who finds grace in your sight.' *Roberts.*—¶ *Lest some evil take me.* Heb. *לֵּסְתָּ פֶּן הָרָעָה* *lest the evil, or this evil*; i. e. the threatened destruction. He was apprehensive he

21 And he said unto him, See, 'I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

f Job 42. 8, 9. Ps. 145. 19.

should not be able to reach the destined place of safety till the fiery tempest had burst forth.

20. *Is it not a little one?* Heb. מצער *Mitzar*; in allusion to which the name of the city was afterwards called 'Zoar,' whereas before it was known by the name of 'Bela,' Gen. 14. 2. Targ. Jerus. 'It is little, and its sins are little.'

21. *I have accepted thee.* Heb. נשאתי פניך *I have accepted thy face*, or *I have lifted up thy face*; i. e. I have a compassionate respect to thee, and will gratify thee by granting this request. The expression probably arose from an Eastern custom. Persons there in preferring a petition, instead of falling upon their knees, often prostrate themselves with their face to the ground. When the petition is accepted, the prince or potentate commands them to be raised from their lowly posture, which is expressed by 'lifting up the face.' In common usage therefore, the phrase, is clearly synonymous with 'showing favour,' but it is sometimes taken in a bad sense, and prohibited as implying what is termed 'respect of persons,' or undue partiality, which is denied of God, Deut. 10. 17, and forbidden to men, Deut. 16. 19. Gr. θαυμάσας σου τον προσωπον *I have admired thy face or thy person*; parallel to which the Apostle, Jude, 16, says, 'having men's persons in admiration'; i. e. with sinister motives, because of advantage. Thus doth a gracious God, according to the words of the Psalmist, Ps. 145-19, 'fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them.'

22. *I cannot do any thing till thou be*

22 Haste thee, escape thither; for <sup>a</sup> I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither: therefore <sup>b</sup> the name of the city was called Zoar.

g ch. 32. 25, 26.. Ex. 32. 10. Deut. 9. 14. Mark 6. 5. h ch. 13. 10. & 14. 2.

come thither. The inability here mentioned is of course wholly of the *moral* and not of the *physical* kind, similar in its nature, though arising from an opposite cause, to that affirmed of our Saviour, Mark, 6. 5, 'He could there do no mighty work,' by reason of the unbelief of the people. He *could not* because he *would not*. There was a moral unfitness between such a state of mind and such a display of power, so that he determined not to put it forth. But the expression in the present instance is very remarkable. What an evidence does it afford of the favour in which God holds a good man! What a testimony to the efficacy of his prayers and intercessions. The Most High is pleased to represent his hands as bound by his paramount regard to the welfare of such; he can do nothing towards the punishment of the wicked till *their* safety is secured. Had we not a divine warrant for the use of such language, it would doubtless be a high presumption in us to employ it, and when we find the Holy Spirit adopting it, we still pause in devout admiration mingled with a latent misgiving whether we are indeed to understand the words in their most obvious sense. But our doubts are precluded by adverting to numerous parallel instances in God's dealings with his people. On more than one occasion when he had determined to execute vengeance on Israel for their perverseness, the intercessions of Moses are represented as having been in effect, irresistible, so that the threatened judgment was averted. What an argument is this for our pressing earnestly

23 ¶ The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24 Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah

i Deut. 29. 23. Is. 13. 19. Jer. 20. 16. & 50. 40. Ezek. 16. 49, 50. Hos. 11. 8. Amos 4. 11. Zeph. 2. 9. Luke 17. 29. 2 Pet. 2. 6. Jude 7.

forward to the acquisition of the same character. If we are prompted at all by the noble ambition of becoming benefactors of our race, let us seek to form ourselves on the models proposed in the Scriptures, and thus by being made eminently acceptable to God become in the highest degree useful to the communities in which we live.

23. *The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.* Rather, according to the Hebrew, 'The sun rose or went forth upon the earth, and Lot entered into Zoar.' The sun-light of the last day which was ever to dawn upon ill-fated Sodom, had now appeared, and the inhabitants, unconscious, or rather incredulous of danger, gaze upon those early beams, which, as it respected them, were soon to be extinguished in eternal night. The opening of the day in its usual serenity probably confirmed them in their insensibility to peril. The night for the most part is the season of alarm and danger. It was at night that the destroying angel passed through Egypt to slay the first-born—at night, that the sword of the Lord penetrated the camp of Assyria, and destroyed a hundred and eighty-five thousand men—at night, that the shadow of a hand wrote on the wall of Belshazzar's palace the departure of his kingdom and the close of his glories and his life together. But the day has ever been regarded as the season of security. The first ray of the morning dispels the phantoms of the imagination, and transfers us from scenes of fancied suffering to those of real enjoyment. Light discovers actual peril and

brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;

25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

k ch. 14. 3. Ps. 107. 34.

brings with it the means of escape. When the day breaks upon us it scatters peace, and joy, and safety in its smiles. Alas! how little do we know where danger lurks, and when the dream of happiness shall be broken! Sodom escapes the perils of the night to fall by unexpected vengeance in the morning! As the destruction was unexpected, it was the more terrible; and as it was sudden it admitted of no escape. The sons-in-law of Lot, who had mocked his admonitions, are roused to a sense of their truth and importance by the hand of death. Let this consideration prepare us for a still greater event, in the solemnities of which we must all participate, and in reference to which our Saviour has taught us how we are to improve the narrative of the present awful scene, Luke 17. 28—30, 'As it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all: Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.'

24. *The Lord rained—brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.* Heb. גְּפִרִית וָאֵשׁ *brimstone and fire*; that is, by a common idiom, ignited or burning brimstone. Thus 1 Chron. 22. 5, 'Of fame and of glory,' i. e. of glorious fame. Jer. 22. 3, 'Execute ye judgment and righteousness,' i. e. righteous judgment. Jer. 29. 11, 'To give an end and expectation,' i. e. an expected end. Acts, 14. 13, 'Brought oxen and garlands,' i. e. oxen garland-



ed, or having their heads adorned with fillets. As we are informed in a previous chapter that the vale of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and the towns must have been situated on a mine, as it were, of that combustible matter, it does not perhaps detract from the supernatural character of the visitation to suppose that the Almighty saw fit to employ natural agencies in bringing it about. As then the phrase 'brimstone and fire' may with equal propriety be rendered 'burning brimstone,' and as sulphur is found in greater or less quantities in the neighbouring hills, it is conceivable that it may have been 'rained down from heaven' in consequence of being first thrown up by a volcanic eruption, of which there are striking indications at the present day pervading that whole region. But reserving this point for a fuller discussion in the sequel of the present note, it will be proper here to give a somewhat detailed account of that remarkable body of water which occupies the site of the devastated plain of Siddim. This, the reader is aware, is a heavy, sluggish, fetid, and unwholesome lake known by the various titles of the 'Salt Sea' (Numb. 34. 3. Deut. 3. 17. Josh. 15. 5); the 'Sea of the Plain' (Deut. 4. 39); and the 'East Sea' (Ezek. 47. 18. Joel, 2. 20,) from its situation relatively to Judea. By Josephus and other Greek writers it was called the 'Lake Asphaltites,' that is, 'the Bituminous Lake,' from the abundance of asphaltum or bitumen found in it and around it; while by the Arabs it is termed 'Bahar Loth' *Sea of Lot*, and by the Turks 'Ula Deguisi.' Its usual appellation among Europeans is the 'Dead Sea.' It is situated in the south of Palestine, and is of an irregular oblong figure, extending generally from north to south, but with a leaning of the northern portion eastward, which gives to the whole figure an appearance which has been compared to that of a

bow. The mountains which enclose the Ghor, or valley of the Jordan, open considerably at the northern extremity of the lake, and, encompassing it on the east and west sides, approach again at the southern extremity, leaving between them only a narrow plain which, under the names of El Ghor and El Araba, is continued southward to the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. The dimensions of the lake are very variously stated. The account most usually followed is that of Josephus, which seems to make it 72 miles long by 18 broad; but it would appear that this must be taken as a large estimate, for many modern observers have been disposed to reduce it by one-third, or even one-half. It is probable that the dimensions of the lake have become more contracted than in former times; but nothing more determinate than ocular impressions has hitherto been offered on this subject. The epithets 'Dead,' and 'Salt,' which are applied to this great lake, may respectively form the points on which a short account of it may turn; the former denoting its general appearance, and the latter the quality of its waters. The name 'Dead Sea' is supposed to have been given to the lake in consequence of the desolate appearance of all things around, and the absence of animal and vegetable life; for the waters being intensely salt, and the soil around deeply impregnated with saline matter, no plants or trees will grow there, and the saturation of the air with saline particles and sulphureous and bituminous vapours is also unfavourable to vegetable life. It is a necessary consequence of this, that no wild animals resort thither for food or drink, nor are flocks or herds led to its shores. The absence of fish also in its waters prevents even the resort of those water-fowl whose presence gives some animation to lakes less peculiarly circumstanced; and, altogether, the general aspect of nature

in this blighted region is dull, cheerless, and depressing. The unusual stillness of so large a body of water is quite in unison with the general desolation, to which it not a little contributes. This is doubtless owing in a great degree to the shelter of the mountains which enclose it, and shut out the strong winds; but part of the effect may perhaps be attributed to the heaviness of the water. - 'It was nearly dark,' says Mr. Stephens (Incid. of Trav., vol. 2. p. 212), 'when we reached the top of the mountain, and I sat down for a moment to take a last look at the Dead Sea. From this distance its aspect fully justified its name. It was calm, motionless, and seemingly dead; there was no wave or ripple on its surface, nor was it hurrying on, like other waters, to pay its tribute to the ocean; the mountains around it were also dead; no trees or shrubs, not a blade of grass grew on their naked sides; and, as in the days of Moses, 'Brimstone and salt; it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon.' Where the waters occasionally overflow their usual limit, a saline crust is left upon the surface of the soil resembling hoarfrost, or snow. The lake, and the lake only, being at certain seasons covered with a dense mist which is dissipated by the rays of the sun, it came to be said that black and sulphureous exhalations, destructive to animal life, were constantly arising; and it was added, that these exhalations struck dead any birds that attempted to fly across. The rare appearance of birds in consequence of the saltiness of the water and the absence of fish, probably occasioned this report, which is now known to be incorrect. It is not uncommon to see swallows dipping for the water necessary to build their nests. Maundrell saw several birds flying about, and skimming the surface without any visible harm. The same fact is attested by Volney; and Mr. Ste-

phens says that almost at the moment of his turning from the Jordan to the Dead Sea, notwithstanding the long credited accounts that no bird could fly over without dropping dead upon its surface, he saw a flock of gulls floating quietly on its bosom; and when roused with a stone, they flew down the lake, skimming its surface until they had carried themselves out of sight. As to the absence of fish, there is no good reason to doubt it. We do not recollect that any European travellers discovered any, although some *heard* of fish from the natives; but we know how little reliance in general is to be placed on the reports of the Orientals on such subjects. The few shells of fish, always unoccupied, which have occasionally been found on the shores by Maundrell and other travellers, do not seem to afford any satisfactory evidence on the subject. Mr. Madden remarks (Travels, vol. 2. p. 210), 'I found several fresh water shells on the beach, such as I before noticed on the Lake of Tiberias; and also the putrid remains of two small fish, of the size of mullet; which no doubt had been carried down from the Jordan, as well as the shells; for I am well convinced, both from my own observation and from the accounts of the Arabs, that no living creature is to be found in the Dead Sea.' The waters of the Lake Oormiah in the north of Persia are probably not more salt than those of the Dead Sea, and they are not known to contain any fish, or trace of animal life. The water itself, like that of the sea, is of a dark blue colour, shaded with green, according as the light falls upon it, and perfectly clear. It is much saltier than the waters of the sea, and has also an unpleasant bitterness. An American missionary who visited the spot says, 'The water looks remarkably clear and pure; but on taking it into my mouth, I found it nauseous, and bitter, I think,

beyond any thing I ever tasted. My clothes were wet by the waves, and as they dried, I found them covered with salt.' Another traveller says, 'I went till up to the knee into the sea, and took some water into my mouth. It was impossible to keep it there. Its saltness is even greater than that of the ocean, and it produces a sensation on the lips similar to that from a strong solution of alum. My boots were scarcely dry, when they were already covered with salt; our clothes, hats, hands, faces, were impregnated by this mineral in less than two hours.' But this wonderful saltness is not its only peculiarity. One of the most remarkable characters of this lake is the buoyancy of its waters. Josephus relates that the most weighty things thrown into it will not sink; and that the Emperor Vespasian, to try its strength, caused certain men who could not swim to be thrown in with their hands tied behind them, and they floated on the surface. 'From my own experience,' says Mr. Stephens, 'I can almost corroborate the most extravagant accounts of the ancients. Before I left Jerusalem, I had resolved not to bathe in it, on account of my health; and I had sustained my resolution during the whole of my day's ride along its shores; but, on the point of turning up among the mountains, I could resist no longer. My clothes seemed to come off of their own accord; and, before Paul had time to ask me what I was going to do, I was floating on its waters. Paul and the Arabs followed; and, after splashing about for a while, we lay like a parcel of corks upon its surface. I know, in reference to my own specific gravity, that in the Atlantic or Mediterranean I cannot float without some little movement of the hands; and even then my body is almost totally submerged; but here, when I threw myself upon my back, my body was half out of water.

It was an exertion even for my lank Arabs to keep themselves under. When I struck out in swimming, it was exceedingly awkward; for my legs were constantly rising to the surface, and even above the water. I could have lain there and read with perfect ease. In fact, I could have slept, and it would have been a much easier bed than the bushes at Jericho. It was ludicrous to see one of the horses. As soon as his body touched the water he was afloat, and turned over on his side; he struggled with all his force to preserve his equilibrium, but the moment he stopped moving he turned over on his side again, and almost on his back, kicking his feet out of water, and snorting with terror. The worst of my bath was, after it was over, my skin was covered with a thick, glutinous substance, which it required another ablution to get rid of; and after I had wiped myself dry, my body burnt and smarted as if I had been turned round before a roasting fire. My face and ears were incrustated with salt; my hairs stood out, 'each particular hair on end;' and my eyes were irritated and inflamed, so that I felt the effects of it for several days. In spite of all this, however, revived and refreshed by my bath, I mounted my horse a new man.' Mr. Madden, however, was less fortunate. 'About six in the morning,' says he, 'I reached the shore, and much against the advice of my excellent guide, I resolved on having a bath. I was desirous of ascertaining the truth of the assertion, that 'nothing sinks in the Dead Sea.' I swam a considerable distance from the shore; and about four yards from the beach I was beyond my depth: the water was the coldest I ever felt, and the taste of it most detestable; it was that of a solution of nitre, mixed with an infusion of quassia. Its buoyancy I found to be far greater than that of any sea I ever swam in, not excepting the Eux-

me, which is extremely salt. I could lie like a log of wood on the surface, without stirring hand or foot, as long as I chose; but with a good deal of exertion I could just dive sufficiently deep to cover all my body, but I was again thrown on the surface, in spite of my endeavours to descend lower. On coming out, the wounds in my feet pained me excessively; the poisonous quality of the waters irritated the abraded skin, and ultimately made an ulcer of every wound, which confined me fifteen days in Jerusalem; and became so troublesome in Alexandria, that my medical attendant was apprehensive of gangrene.' (Trav. vol. 2. p. 210.) These facts indicate a degree of density in the water of this lake utterly unknown in those of any other. Its specific gravity has in fact been ascertained to be 1.211, that of fresh water being 1.000. Some of the water has been bottled and brought to Europe, and subjected to analysis. The results obtained by Dr. Marcet were as follows:—

	Grains
Muriate of lime,	3.920
Muriate of magnesia,	10.246
Muriate of soda,	10.360
Sulphate of lime,	0.054
	<hr/>
	24.580

thus giving about one fourth of its weight in various kinds of salts.—As the Lake has no outlet, Reland, Pococke, and other travellers have supposed that it must throw off its superfluous water by some subterranean channel; but although it has been calculated that the Jordan daily discharges into it 6,090,000 tons of water, besides what it receives from the Arnon and several smaller streams, it is now known, that the loss by evaporation is adequate to explain the absorption of the waters. Its occasional rise and fall at certain seasons, is doubtless owing to the greater or less volume which the Jordan and the other streams bring

down from the mountains.—'The 'apples of Sodom,' beautiful without, and dust and ashes within; the doleful sounds issuing from the lake; and the sometimes visible remains of the submerged cities:—these, and other points of interest with which tradition and fanciful imaginations have invested the Dead Sea, we may pass unnoticed; but on the last point, we cannot refrain from expressing our astonishment that sensible modern travellers should have thought it worth their while to look narrowly for walls and pillars under the water, and that some have even fancied that they had seen them. The cities of the plain were probably small towns, built with mud or bricks, without any pillars, unless of wood; and a few days' submersion would convert them into heaps of rubbish, or dissolve them in the waters, not to speak of the previous overthrow and burning which they experienced. Most of the exaggerations and marvellous stories about this lake are doubtless owing to its singularity, no similar lake being known to the mass of ancient writers and more modern travellers. The mind must ever be deeply impressed by regarding the lake as a monument of the divine anger against a sinful people; nor is its solemnity, as such, diminished by the knowledge that there are other lakes very similar to the Dead Sea. The Lake Oormiah, in Persia, for instance, exhibits a very striking analogy to it in many of its principal features; nor is there any considerable difference of dimension between them.' *Pict. Bible.* It only remains to offer some farther remarks upon the connection between the Mosaic narrative, and the present physical character of the lake and the surrounding country.

The grand question is as to the origin of the large quantities of sulphur and salt with which the region of the Dead Sea now abounds. Are they native to the soil of the valley and the

mountains, elements which existed there prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or are they deposits left there in consequence of that destruction? A solution of this question would assist us greatly in determining the true nature of the judgment by which the devoted cities were overthrown; whether it was *purely* miraculous, effected by a literal shower of burning brimstone from heaven, in which terraqueous agents had no share; or whether the tremendous action of earthquake and volcano were also enlisted on this occasion in obedience to the special volition of the Deity. A miracle is doubtless to be recognised in either case, but on the latter supposition the miracle consisted, not in *creating* at the time the element employed, but simply in *bringing forth* and *directing* in an extraordinary manner those natural agencies which were already in existence. On this point commentators are divided. On the one hand, it is contended that the exceeding fruitfulness asserted by Moses of the vale of Siddim, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, is inconsistent with the existence of those mines of fossil salt which some travellers have affirmed to be coeval with the soil. Such a theory Prof. Paxton thinks to be utterly at war with the veracity of the sacred writer. 'No disproportionate quantity of saline matter, could then (originally) have been present either in the soil or in the surrounding mountains. That it abounded with bitumen, some have inferred from the assertion of Moses, that the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits: where the Hebrew word *חמר chemar*, which we render *slime*, others, and particularly the Seventy interpreters, render *bitumen*. But *גופרית gophrith*, and not *chemar*, is the word that Moses employs to denote *brimstone*, in his account of the judgment which overwhelmed the cities of the plain; and

by consequence, *brimstone* is not meant, when *chemar* is used, but *bitumen*, a very different substance. Hence the brimstone which now impregnates the soil of the Salt Sea, and banishes almost every kind of vegetation from its shores, must be regarded, not as an original, but an accidental ingredient, remaining from the destruction of the vale by fire and brimstone from heaven. The same remark applies to the mines of fossil salt, on the surrounding mountains; the saline matter was deposited in the cavities which it now occupies at the same time, else the vale of Siddim, instead of verdant pastures, and abundant harvests, had exhibited the same frightful sterility from the beginning, for which it is so remarkable in modern times. Bitumen, if the Hebrew word *chemar* denotes that substance, abounds in the richest soils; for in the vale of Shinar, whose soil, by the agreement of all writers, is fertile in the highest degree, the builders of the tower of Babel used it for mortar. The ark of bulrushes in which Moses was embarked on the Nile, was in like manner daubed with bitumen (*chemar*), and pitch; but the mother of Moses must have found it in the soil of Egypt, near the Nile, on whose borders she lived. It is therefore reasonable to suppose, that bitumen abounded in Goshen, a region famed for the richness of its pastures. Hence it may be fairly concluded, that the vale of Siddim before its destruction, in respect of natural fertility, resembled the plain of Shinar, and the land of Egypt along the Nile. But it is well known, that wherever brimstone and saline matter abound, there sterility and desolation reign. Is it not then reasonable to infer, that the sulphureous and saline matters, discovered in the waters and on the shores of the Asphaltites, are the relics of the divine vengeance executed on the cities of the plain, and not original ingredients of the soil? If



we listen to the testimony of the sacred writers, what was reasonable hypothesis rises into absolute certainty. Moses expressly ascribes the brimstone, the salt, and the burning, in the overthrow of Sodom, to the immediate vengeance of heaven; 'When they see the plagues of that land, - - that the whole land is brimstone, and salt, and burning; that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon, (like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath); even all nations shall say, Wherefore has the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger,' Dent. 29. 22. In this passage, the *brimstone, salt, and burning*, are mentioned as true and proper effects of the divine wrath; and since this fearful destruction is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, the brimstone and salt into which the vale of Siddim was turned, must also be the true and proper effects of divine anger. This indeed, Moses asserts in the plainest terms: 'Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground,' Gen. 19. 24. But since the brimstone and the fire were rained from heaven, so must the salt, with which they are connected in the former quotation: and this is the opinion received by the Jewish doctors. The frightful sterility which followed the brimstone, salt, and burning, in the first quotation, is in the same manner represented as an effect of the divine judgment upon the vale of Siddim; 'It is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon.' The barrenness and desolation that result from the action of brimstone and salt, are introduced by the prophet in these words: 'Thus saith the Lord, Cursed

be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in a salt land*, and not inhabited,' Jer. 17. 5, 6. In this passage, the *salt* is assigned as the cause that the parched places in the wilderness remain in a state of perpetual sterility. In the judgments which the prophet Zephaniah was directed to predict against the kingdom of Moab, he alludes expressly to the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and intimates, that one part of that punishment consisted in the vale being turned into salt. 'As I live, saith the Lord, - - Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and *salt pits*, and a perpetual desolation,' Zeph. 2. 9. The qualities of the lake which now covers the once fertile and delightful vale of Siddim, and the desolate appearance of the surrounding country, as has been already shown, perfectly correspond with the words of the inspired writers, and the conclusions of reason.' *Paxton*.—Such are the main arguments adduced against the volcanic origin of this remarkable locality. But on the other hand it is maintained (1.) That all the ancient and modern traditions connected with the place refer the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to such a catastrophe. Thus Tacitus relates (Hist. Lib. v. c. 7.) that a tradition still prevailed in his days, of certain powerful cities having been destroyed by thunder and lightning; and of the plain, in which they were situated, having been burnt up. He adds, that evident traces of such a catastrophe remained. The earth was parched, and had lost all its natural powers of vegetation; and whatever sprang up, either spontaneously or in consequence of being planted, gradually

withered away, and crumbled into dust. The historian concludes with expressing his own belief in this awful judgment, derived from an attentive consideration of the country, in which it was said to have happened. In a similar manner Strabo, (*Geog. Lib. xvi. p. 764.*) after describing the nature of the Lake Asphaltites, adds, that the whole of its appearance gives an air of probability to the prevailing tradition, that thirteen cities, the chief of which was Sodom, were once destroyed and swallowed up by earthquakes, fire, and an inundation of boiling sulphureous water. The same account is given by Pliny and Solinus. (2.) Volney, and after him Malte Brun, are decidedly of opinion that the whole region from the remotest periods has been the theatre of volcanic action, the effects of which may be still traced along the banks of the Lower Jordan, and more especially about the Lake itself. 'The south of Syria,' says Volney, 'that is, the hollow through which the Jordan flows, is a country of volcanoes; the bituminous and sulphureous sources of the Lake Asphaltites, the lava, the pumice-stones, thrown upon its banks, and the hot bath of Tabaria, demonstrate that this valley has been the seat of a subterranean fire which is not yet extinguished. Clouds of smoke are often observed to issue from the lake, and new crevices to be formed upon its banks. If conjectures in such cases were not too liable to error, we might suspect that the whole valley has been formed only by a violent sinking of a country which formerly poured the Jordan into the Mediterranean. It appears certain, at least, that the catastrophe of five cities, destroyed by fire, must have been occasioned by the eruption of a volcano, then burning. These eruptions have ceased long since, but earthquakes, which usually succeed them, still continue to be felt at intervals in this country. The coast in

general is subject to them, and history gives us many examples of earthquakes which have changed the face of Antioch, Laodicea, Tripoli, Berytus, Tyre, Sidon, &c.' To which may be added the tremendous shock of 1837 which destroyed Tiberias, Saphet, and many other towns in the north of Palestine. The following then may be stated as the theory of those who build upon the facts above mentioned in connection with present geographical phenomena. In the first place it is to be observed, that the vale of Sodom abounds in veins of bitumen, which are to be found not only on the surface, but to a great depth in the soil. In the next place it is worthy of notice, that bitumen whether in a liquid or solid state, is exceedingly combustible; and that a thunderbolt falling upon it would no more fail of setting it on fire, than the flash from the steel and flint fails to ignite gunpowder. Now the account given by Moses is, that 'the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;' by which, according to the Hebrew idiom, is to be understood flaming brimstone, in other words lightning. It is true that Moses, though he adds, that 'God overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground,' does not explain how this overthrow took place; but a knowledge of the above facts at once leads to the following as at least a probable conclusion. The lightning falling upon the bitumen would instantly set it on fire, and the fire would not only skim the surface but penetrate deep into the soil, sweeping along, as it does in a coal-pit, with the vein of combustible matter. The consequence would be that a terrible earthquake would take place, followed, as such a convulsion always is, by a subsiding of the ground; and the waters rushing in to the hollow thus created, would, by

mixing with the bitumen, form a small lake, where, previous to the awful visitation, a fruitful valley lay. Thus would perish the cities and their polluted inhabitants; whilst the lake would remain as a lasting memorial of God's power to punish as well by fire as by a deluge of water. Chateaubriand, however, ranges himself among the opponents of this theory, though he seems inclined to admit that physical agencies were not excluded from the judgment which overthrew the Pentapolis. 'I cannot coincide in opinion with those who suppose the Dead Sea to be the crater of a volcano. I have seen Vesuvius, Solfatara, Monte Nuovo, in the lake of Fusino, the peak of the Azores, the Mamelif, opposite to Carthage, the extinguished volcanoes of Auvergne, and remarked in all of them the same characters, that is to say, mountains excavated in the form of a funnel, lava, and ashes, which exhibited incontestable proofs of the agency of fire. The Dead Sea on the contrary, is a lake of great length, curved like a bow, placed between two ranges of mountains, which have no mutual coherence in form, no homogeneity of soil. They do not meet at the two extremities of the lake, but continue, the one to bound the valley of Jordan, and to run northward as far as the Lake of Tiberias; the other to stretch away to the south till lost in the sands of Yemen. Bitumen, warm springs, and phosphoric stones are found; it is true, in the mountains of Arabia; but I met with none of these in the opposite chain. But then, the presence of hot springs, sulphur, and asphaltos, is not sufficient to attest the anterior existence of a volcano. With respect to the ingulphed cities, I adhere to the account given in Scripture, without summoning physics to my aid. Besides, if we adopt the idea of Professor Michaelis, and the learned Büsching, in his Memoir of the Dead Sea, physics may

be admitted in the catastrophe of the guilty cities, without offence to religion. Sodom was built upon a mine of bitumen, as we know from the testimony of Moses and Josephus, who speak concerning the wells of bitumen, in the valley of Siddim. Lightning kindled the combustible mass, and the cities sunk in the subterraneous conflagration. M. Malte Brun ingeniously suggests, that Sodom and Gomorrah themselves might have been built of bituminous stones, and thus have been set in flames by the fire of heaven.' Chateaubriand. But to this we have to oppose the opinion of Mr. Madden. 'The face of the mountains and of the surrounding country has all the appearance of a volcanic region and having resided for some years at the foot of Vesuvius, having visited Solfatara, Etna, and Stromboli, I was tolerably conversant with volcanic productions. I have no hesitation in saying, that the sea which occupies the site of Sodom and Gomorrah, Adma, Zeboim, and Zoar, covers the crater of a volcano, and that, in all probability, heaven made that mode of destruction the instrument of Divine vengeance. I must confess I found neither pumice-stone, nor genuine black lava, but the soil was covered with white porous and red veined quartz, which had decidedly undergone combustion.' To the same effect De la Martine observes, 'It is a Sea that seems petrified. And how has it been formed? Most likely, as the Bible tells us, and as all probability declares, it was the vast centre of a chain of volcanic mountains which, stretching from Jerusalem to Mesopotamia, and from Lebanon to Idumea, burst open in a crater, at a time when seven cities were peopled on its plain. The cities would have been overthrown by the earthquake. The Jordan which most probably flowed at that time through the plain, and emptied itself into the Red Sea, being stopped all at

once by the volcanic hillocks, rose high above its bed, and ingulphing itself in the craters of Sodom and Gomorrah, might have formed this sea, which is corrupted by the union of sulphur, salt, and bitumen—the usual production of volcanic eruptions. This is the fact from all appearances.’ (Trav. p. 234.)

On the whole, we cannot but consider the volcanic theory as the best sustained of the two. The objection of Chateaubriand that the usual phenomena of extinct volcanoes such as a crater, lava, ashes, &c. are wanting, is of little weight when opposed to the counter testimony afforded by actual appearances and immemorial tradition. Not to advert to the consideration that abundance of such materials may have been covered by the waters of the lake; not to insist on the remark of Clarke (Trav. in the Holy Land, p. 372) that he noticed a mountain on its western shore resembling in form the cone of Vesuvius, *and having also a crater upon its top, which was plainly-discernible*; the physical characters of the region exhibit the most conclusive evidence that strata of bituminous and sulphureous matter, capable of explosion, did formerly exist on the spot. Deep clefts or pits containing hot springs at the bottom of which bitumen is found, occur in the immediate vicinity of the Lake, while the floating asphaltum which gives to the lake one of the many names is collected by the Arabs, and is not only used as pitch, but enters into the composition of medicines, and seems to have been anciently much employed in Egypt in the embalming of bodies. The shores of the sea, and also the neighbouring hills, furnish a sort of stone or coal, which readily ignites, and yields an intolerable stench in burning. Captains Irby and Mangles collected on the southern coast lumps of nitre and fine sulphur, from the size of a nutmeg up to that of a small hen’s egg, which, it was evi-

dent from their situation, had been brought down by the rain; their great deposit must be sought for, they say, ‘in the cliff.’ If then the sulphur and asphaltum be indigenous to the soil, and not a relic of the material engendered miraculously for the destruction of Sodom, it remains to inquire whether the same can be said of the salt.—Almost every traveller has spoken of the vast quantities of salt by which not only the waters of the Lake are impregnated, but which also spread a kind of frost-work over the shore and encrust nearly every object. ‘The origin of this mineral,’ says Volney (Trav. v. i. p. 191), ‘is easy to be discovered: for on the south-west shore, are mines of fossil salt, of which I have brought away several specimens. They are situated in the side of the mountains which extend along that border, and for time immemorial, have supplied the neighbouring Arabs, and even the city of Jerusalem.’ But we have still stronger proof in the following account of the ‘Valley of Salt’ which the American editor of Calmet places in the near vicinity of this Lake. ‘This valley would seem to be either the northern part of the great valley El Ghor, leading south from the Dead Sea, or perhaps some smaller valley or ravine opening into it near the Dead Sea. The whole of this region is strongly impregnated with salt, as appears from the report of all travellers. According to Captains Irby and Mangles ‘a gravelly ravine, studded with bushes of acacia and other shrubs, conducts [from the west] to the great sandy plain, at the southern end of the Dead Sea. On entering this plain, the traveller has on his right a continued hill, composed partly of salt and partly of hardened sand, running south-east and north-west, till, after proceeding a few miles, the plain opens to the south, bounded, at the distance of about eight miles, by a sandy cliff from sixty to

eighty feet high, which traverses the valley El Ghor like a wall, forming a barrier to the waters of the Lake when at their greatest height.' On this plain, besides the saline appearance left by the retiring of the waters of the Lake, the travellers noticed, lying on the ground, several large fragments of rock-salt, which led them to examine the hill, on the right of the ravine by which they had descended to the plain, described above, as composed partly of salt and partly of hardened sand. They found the salt, in many instances, hanging from the cliffs, in clear perpendicular points resembling icicles. They observed also strata of salt of considerable thickness, having very little sand mixed with it, generally in perpendicular lines. During the rainy season, the torrents apparently bring down immense masses of this mineral. Was, then, this 'gravelly ravine,' the particular 'Valley of Salt?' or was this term applied more generally to this whole plain, which exhibits similar characteristics? Strabo mentions, that to the southward of the Dead Sea there are towns and cities built entirely of salt; and 'although,' add the travellers, 'such an account seems strange, yet when we contemplate the scene before us, it did not seem incredible.' The sea had thrown up at high-water mark a quantity of wood, with which the travellers attempted to make a fire, in order to bake some bread; but it was so impregnated with salt, that all their efforts were unavailing. The track, after leaving the salt-hill, led across the barren flats of the back-water of the lake, then left partly dry by the effects of evaporation. They passed six drains running into the sea; some were wet, and still draining the dreary level which they intersected; others were dry. These had a strong marshy smell, similar to what is perceivable on most of the muddy flats in salt-water harbours, but by no means more unpleasant.

On the southern extremity of the eastern shore, the salt is also deposited by the evaporation of the water of the lake. The travellers found several of the natives peeling off a solid layer of salt, several inches thick, with which they loaded their asses. At another point, also where the water, being shallow, retires or evaporates rapidly, a considerable level is left, encrusted with a salt that is but half dried and consolidated, appearing like ice in the commencement of a thaw, and giving way nearly ankle deep. All these appearances are surely sufficient to justify the appellation of Plain or Valley of Salt.' *Robinson's Calmet*. If then we find the very materials of this awful visitation at hand in the neighbouring hills, what shall prevent us from supposing that a volcanic eruption, perhaps from the identical crater, which Clarke describes, pouring down upon the guilty cities a shower of inflamed sulphur or nitre mixed with heated salt, while the whole adjoining plain underwent a simultaneous overthrow in consequence of a bituminous explosion? There is nothing, that we can see, in this supposition at variance with the really miraculous character of the event—for it was omnipotence that waked the sleeping subterranean fires at that particular juncture—nothing but what is in strict accordance with the geological phenomena that now distinguish this remarkable region. Indeed the more close and rigid have been the researches into the physical characters of the basin of the Dead Sea, the more clearly have the results appeared to be precisely such as might be expected from the truth of the foregoing hypothesis. The objection stated above by Paxton, that the presence of sulphur and salt would be inconsistent with the asserted primitive fertility of the plain, is obviated at once by the remark, that by our very supposition these substances were not originally found on the plain, but



in the mountains and that the water is so largely impregnated with saline and sulphureous properties is probably in part at least to the fact that it now extends on either side to the base of the mountains, and thus comes in contact with the materials of which they are composed.—On this whole subject see *Mod. Traveller*, vol. i. pp. 188, 199, Am. Ed.

*The Lord rained—from the Lord out of heaven.* This phraseology is remarkable, and has led some commentators to understand the words as a distinct intimation of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, q. d. 'The Lord, who appeared and conversed with Lot, the Son of God, rained from the Lord who is invisible, from the Father in heaven, the destroying tempest.' But it is perhaps safer to understand it as a mere Hebraic idiom, equivalent to saying, that Jehovah rained in this fearful manner *from himself* out of heaven. That is, such was the appearance of the phenomenon. Parallel modes of speech are not unusual in the sacred writers. Thus, Ex. 24. 1, 'And he (the Lord) said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord,' &c. Hos. 1. 7, 'I will save them by the Lord God.' Zech. 10. 12, 'I will strengthen them in the Lord.' 1 Kings, 8. 1, 'Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon.' The scope of the words is probably to intimate that the fiery shower was extraordinary and miraculous, altogether out of the common course of nature, something to be referred to the hand of Omnipotence.—¶ *Upon Sodom and Gomorrah.*

And also upon the mighty cities Admah and Zeboim, as is evident from Deut. 29. 23. Hos. 11. 5.

25. *Overthrow those cities, and all the plain, &c.* That is, he consumed its productions, he destroyed its beauty, he extinguished the very principles of

its fertility, and submerged the ground itself under the waters of the Jordan, that the foot of man might never tread it more. The destruction was complete and irreparable; the country was in a manner blotted out of the map of Palestine, so fierce was the indignation, so terrible the overthrow. The original word (יָהָפֶחַךְ *yahaphok*) is emphatic, and by being applied not to the buildings only, but to the ground on which they stood, would seem to imply that kind of physical disruption which could be caused only by an earthquake or volcano, or the combined action of both, which we have above endeavoured to show to be nearer the truth. Its leading idea in such connections as the present, is that of *subversion*, and this is obviously an effect additional to any thing that would be caused by the mere descent of a fiery shower from heaven. The catastrophe, therefore, if our interpretation be admitted, was marked with the united horrors of earthquake, and volcano, the latter described as a conflagration from heaven, forming altogether such a scene as baffles conception, and such as the eye of man never witnessed before. Thus were the cities of the plain, and the ground on which they stood, set forth for an example to every succeeding age; and to that awful catastrophe the sacred writers often allude, in their denunciations of the divine judgments against apostate Israel; Deut 23. 23, 'When the generations to come shall see that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning; that it is not sown, nor beareth; nor any grass groweth thereon, (like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath); even all nations shall say, wherefore has the Lord done this unto this land?' The prophet Hosea, pathetically describing the great mercy of God toward the people of Israel; and his unwillingness to punish

26 ¶ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became <sup>1</sup>a pillar of salt.

Luke 17. 32.

them, notwithstanding their signal ingratitude, breaks out into the following animated address, in the name of the Lord, Hos. 11. 8, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together.' But however interesting may be the event *geologically* or *philosophically* considered, it is *practically* fraught with far more important lessons. (1.) The destruction of these fated cities was *extraordinary*. It was unprecedented; there has been nothing like it, either before or since. It was emphatically destruction from the Almighty. He rained down out of heaven, in the manner above described, fire and brimstone upon their habitations, and at the same time upturned the soil on which they stood by the agency of subterranean burnings and explosions. We can enter experimentally into the feelings of those who are overtaken in a fearful storm of thunder and lightning; but who can enter into the feelings of the inhabitants of these devoted cities, when the Lord himself had become their enemy, when he was evidently fighting against them with his great power, and unlocking the magazines of his vengeance for their total destruction! The burning of Moscow by the Russians, to prevent its being sacked by the French, was an awful calamity; but then it was not supernaturally wrought; it was occasioned by human agency, and the inhabitants might flee to a place of safety. But in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah escape was hopeless. Divine vengeance closed in its victims on every side, and as the perdition was inevitable, so (2.)

27 ¶ And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where <sup>m</sup>he stood before the LORD:

m ch. 18. 22.

It was *total*. 'And he overthrew those cities, and *all* the plain, and *all* the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.' It was an utter ruin, and absolutely irreparable. Every habitation was overturned, every animal destroyed, every vegetable consumed, every soul of man, excepting Lot and his party, involved in the dread disaster. Had ten righteous persons been found in it, it would have been preserved for their sakes; but as the degeneracy was universal, so also was the destruction. What a striking demonstration of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the direful consequences it draws after it! What a fearful intimation of the final doom of the ungodly, when they shall be condemned to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire!

26. *His wife looked back from behind him.* 'This seems to imply that she was following her husband, as is the custom at this day. When men, or women, leave their house, they never *look back*, as 'it would be very unfortunate.' Should a husband have left any thing which his wife knows he will require, she will not call on him to turn or look back; but will either take the article herself, or send it by another. Should a man have to *look back* on some great emergency, he will not then proceed on the business he was about to transact. When a person goes along the road, (especially in the evening), he will take great care not to *look back*, 'because the evil spirits would assuredly seize him.' When they go on a journey, they will not look behind, though the palankeen, or bandy, should be close upon them; they step a little on one side, and then look at you. Should a person have to leave

the house of a friend after sunset, he will be advised in going home not to *look back*: 'as much as possible keep your eyes closed; *fear not*.' Has a person made an offering to the evil spirits, he must take particular care when he leaves the place not to *look back*. A female known to me is believed to have got her crooked neck by *looking back*. Such observations as the following may be often heard in private conversation. 'Have you heard that *Comāran* is very ill?'—'No, what is the matter with him?'—'Matter! why he has *looked back*, and the evil spirit has caught him.' *Roberts*.—¶ *And she became a pillar of salt*. How fearfully is judgment here mingled with mercy! Lot was himself delivered, but at what an expense! It was a dismal spectacle to him to behold the city of his residence, his adopted home, including the habitations of his neighbours and probably of some of his own relatives with all their inmates, sinking in the flames of the devouring element. But this was not all. One wave of anguish after another rolled over him. His company, as he left the city, was but small; and now, alas! when he has escaped, one is missing! His wife was the partner of his flight, but not of his preservation. The companion of his youth, the mother of his children, instead of sharing in the joy of their deliverance, stands a pillar of salt in the way towards Sodom, an awful monument of the danger of disobedience! 'What doth it avail her,' says Bp. Hall, 'not to be turned into ashes in Sodom, when she is turned into a pillar of salt in the plain?' This may be deemed a hard fate for a mere glance of the eye; but that glance, no doubt, was expressive of unbelief and a lingering desire to return. Certain it is, that her example is held up by our Lord as a warning against *turning back*, which intimates that such was the meaning of her look. But even

though her *looking back* should not be supposed to have inspired a wish to *go back*, yet still it was disobeying an express command, a command which, for wise reasons, was made the test of obedience, and consequently she sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and what reason had she to expect any milder doom? We may allow for the strength of natural curiosity, for the force of motherly, sisterly, and neighbourly affection, yet with every abatement, it was a great sin, because upon her abstaining from it was suspended her temporal, if not her eternal, salvation. Behold then the goodness and severity of God; towards Lot that went forward, goodness; towards his wife that looked back, severity. Though nearly related to a righteous man, and a monument of distinguishing mercy in her deliverance out of Sodom, yet rebelling against an express mandate of heaven, her privileges and relations availed her nothing; God would not connive at her disobedience; she became a mournful illustration of the truth that the righteous who turn away from their righteousness shall perish! While then we lament her fate, let us profit by her example.—As to the meaning of the phrase, '*became a pillar of salt*,' commentators are not agreed. The more common opinion is, that she was suddenly petrified and changed into a statue of rock salt, which either by its own nature or by miraculous power was made capable of continuing undissolved by the action of the elements. In conformity with this is the testimony of Josephus, who says expressly that Lot's wife '*was changed into a pillar of salt, for I have seen it, and it remains to this day*.' Clement, of Rome, also says that it was standing there to his time, which was about the time of Josephus; and Irenaeus says that it was there a century still later. Some modern travellers relate that it

remains there still; but the probability is that they were one and all imposed upon by the reports of those who dwelt at or near the spot; just as travellers at this day are often told that such and such objects are real monuments of antiquity when there is not a particle of evidence of the truth of the statement. Josephus and the others no doubt saw what they *were told* was the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was turned, and in like manner the traveller is still told that he sees the very water-pot which contained the water miraculously turned into wine in Cana of Galilee. The truth is, the literal mode of interpretation is not demanded by the terms of the text. Salt is a symbol of perpetuity. For this reason the covenant spoken of Num. 18. 19, is called a 'covenant of salt,' i. e. an enduring, a perpetual covenant. Thus too 2 Chron. 13. 5, 'The Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David, even to him and to his sons by a *covenant of salt*,' i. e. by the most binding and lasting engagement. See Note on Judg. 9. 45. In like manner a 'pillar of salt' conveys the idea of a lasting monument, a perpetual memorial of the sad consequences of disobedience. We may suppose with great probability that the saline and sulphureous matter which, in consequence of the eruption, was showering down from the atmosphere, gathered around the unfortunate woman as a nucleus, forming a thick incrustation, which gradually became hardened, till at last she stood a massive pillar of this mineral matter capable of resisting, perhaps for ages, the action of time and the elements. The perpetuity however indicated by the use of the term 'salt' is not to be considered as depending upon the actual duration of the pillar. That may have worn away in time, and yet the record of the event may have been a perpetual memorial to subsequent generations long after

every trace of the material fabric had disappeared. Indeed in this sense Lot's wife is a 'pillar of salt' to us at the present day; inasmuch as her recorded fate teaches us a lesson of perpetual warning against the sin of apostacy.

27. *And Abraham gat up early to the place, &c.* The narrative now returns to Abraham, to whose history every thing is subservient, and shows that he was far from being unheedful of the predicted doom of Sodom. For aught that he seems to have known, Lot may have been involved in the common destruction; at least it does not appear that he had before received any assurance of his safety, and we deem it a very probable supposition that he had been engaged a great part, if not the whole, of the previous night in earnest intercession in his behalf. Accordingly he repairs at an early hour the next morning, the very morning, it would seem, on which the judgment occurred, to the spot where he had the day before held his favoured communion with Jehovah, which was doubtless a position commanding a full view of the cities of the plain and the adjacent valley of the Jordan. And here what a scene of woe bursts upon his sight! 'Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolation he hath made in the earth.' The fertile and delightful vale of Siddim, whose green fields and well-peopled cities had so often met his view from the rocky heights of Canaan is now enveloped in flames! Not the cities only with their buildings and inhabitants are sinking in the conflagration, but the very ground itself on which they stood shares in the awful catastrophe! Sulphureous smoke mingled with lurid gleams of fire, is constantly rising up in dense pitchy masses, and constitutes all that Abraham is now able to see!—¶ *Lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.* This is rendered by the Septuagint, 'A flame went up out of

28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, <sup>a</sup> the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

29 ¶ And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God <sup>o</sup> remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the

n Rev. 18. 9. o ch. 8. 1. & 18. 23.

the earth as the vapour of a furnace.' It is not unlikely that frequent flashes of fire were intermixed with the clouds of smoke that rolled up from the scene of the devastation. The view must have been awful beyond description, and from its terrific features is no doubt made the Scriptural type of hell, which in allusion to the fate of Sodom, is called the 'lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.' Compare also Deut. 29. 23. Is. 13. 19. Jer. 49. 18. Jude, 7. 2 Pet. 2. 6. The destruction of the spiritual Sodom, Rev. 18. and 19., is moreover evidently described in terms borrowed from the event here described; especially where the bewailing spectators are represented as standing afar off and gazing at the smoke of her burning—a circumstance doubtless drawn from Abraham's here standing at a distance and witnessing the doom of the devoted cities. It has indeed been generally supposed that it was not till the morning *after* the destruction that Abraham went forth to survey the scene, but there is nothing in the text that requires this construction, and from the anxiety he would naturally feel in consequence of the disclosures of the heavenly visitants, we can hardly suppose such a delay to have taken place. This impression is confirmed by what we gather from the purport of the next verse.

29. *God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, &c.* Lot's preservation there-

midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

30 ¶ And Lot went up out of Zoar, and <sup>p</sup> dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cavern, he and his two daughters.

p ver. 17, 19.

fore was for Abraham's sake; and why shall we not suppose it to have been owing to the influence of Abraham's prayers? Is it not natural to understand God's 'remembering Abraham' of his remembering the intercessions of Abraham? And if so, it is but a fair presumption, as before intimated, that the pious uncle had spent the previous night in earnest prayer for his nephew, and that he went forth in the morning under the prompting of an ardent desire to learn the success of his petitions; to see if he could meet with any tokens of the preservation of Lot. Whether he received any assurance to this effect is uncertain, but the fact that Abraham's intervention had availed in some way to the deliverance of Lot comes in very appropriately in this connection, as it gives to the reader precisely the information which Abraham desired for himself. The incident teaches us that one righteous man may fare better for the intercessions of another; and it reminds us too of the unspeakable privilege of those that have an Intercessor in heaven who knows all the evils coming upon them, and prays for them when they forget or neglect to pray for themselves. And not only so; but in the fearful catastrophe of the last day, when a favoured countless multitude shall be seen emerging and soaring to the mountains of salvation, from the midst of a still more countless multitude left to their fate in the flames of a burning world, their deliverance



shall be owing to the efficacy of his prevalent intercession and atoning blood.

30. *Dwelt in the mountain.* That is, in the mountainous district or hill-country of Moab bordering upon what is now the eastern side of the Dead Sea. —¶ *He feared to dwell in Zoar.* But of what was he afraid? Undoubtedly either of fire or water, but of which it is impossible to say. It is altogether likely that for some time after the destruction of the larger cities, the whole adjacent plain was in a disturbed and volcanic state; that rumblings of the earth and occasional eruptions of fire threatened a second visitation of wrath from heaven and kept Lot and his family in continual alarms. Or it may be that he was in dread of being overwhelmed by the approaching waters. The sight of a sea of waters accumulating in the vale and gradually approaching the very borders of Zoar, was not a little calculated to inspire terror. How could he know where it would stop; at what point the Most High would say, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther?' If this were the real cause of his flight, his betaking himself to the mountains would be a very natural step; for there he would of course be most secure from the advancing deluge. But whatever the truth may be on this head, the history demonstrates that the rash counsels which good men adopt under the dictation of fleshly wisdom or passion, are never attended with prosperous issues. They may appear to succeed in the outset, and their authors may for a time bless themselves in a fond conceit of the happiest results, but eventually the truth of the divine declaration will be experienced, Is. 31. 1, 'Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel but not of me;' and they are not to be surprised to find themselves at length driven to have recourse to the very expedients which Heaven

at first prescribed, but which they in their foolish wisdom saw fit to repudiate. He who preferred the plain to the mountain, is here represented repenting of his choice and condemning his folly in not acquiescing at once in the direction of the Almighty. But why did not Lot return to Abraham? There was no occasion now for strife about their herds, for he had lost all, and but just escaped with his life; and he could have no doubt that Abraham would cordially receive him and befriend him to the utmost. Perhaps the most probable supposition is that he was too proud to do this. He left him prosperous; but he must return, if he return at all, poor and degraded and an outcast. This was too severe a trial for his spirit as a man, and he had rather incur new dangers than submit to it. Whatever were his reasons he seems to have made a bad choice and 'forsaken his own mercies.' His daughters, who appear to have contracted such habits in Sodom as would prepare them for any thing, however unnatural, draw him into intemperance and incest, and thus cover his old age with infamy. Such was the sad consequence of declining to go to the mountain when directed, and thinking he could select a better location for himself than that which God had pointed out. 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.' —¶ *Dwelt in a cave.* Not in any one particular cave, any more than in one particular mountain; but his mode of life was now that of those who took up their abode in the cavernous recesses of the mountains, instead of living in the open country, some of which were of vast extent; and it was and is customary for the shepherds to occupy them, and often to shelter the cattle in them while pasturing in the neighbourhood. The people who flee to the mountains in times of danger are glad of the accommodation which such caverns offer, and oc-

31 And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and *there is* not a man in the earth <sup>q</sup>to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth :

q ch. 16. 2, 4. ch. 38. 8. 9. Deut. 25. 5.

cupy them, with their wives and children, and all their property in moveables and cattle. Thus Lot seems to have been circumstanced. See Note on Judg. 6. 2.

32. *Come let us make our father drink wine, &c.* 'When God delivers us from destruction, he doth not secure us from all afflictions: Lot hath lost his wife, his allies, his substance, and now betakes himself to an uncomfortable solitariness. Yet though he fled from company, he could not fly from sin: he who could not be tainted with uncleanness in Sodom, is overtaken with drunkenness and incest in a cave: rather than Satan shall not want baits, his own daughters will prove Sodomites: those which should comfort, betrayed him. How little are some hearts moved with judgments! The ashes of Sodom, and the pillar of salt, were not yet out of their eye, when they dare think of lying with their own father. They knew, that whilst Lot was sober, he could not be unchaste. Drunkenness is the way to all bestial affections and acts: wine knows no difference either of persons or sins.'

*Bp. Hall.* The sacred writer, with his accustomed fidelity, here relates a transaction which throws an indelible stain upon the character of Lot. True, indeed, it was a sin into which Lot was *betrayed* by the machinations of his daughters, and not one into which he entered knowingly or of set purpose. This circumstance mitigates the offence greatly on his part, though it by no means leaves him guiltless; for however he may have been unconscious of the incest, we cannot but suppose him culpable in yielding to the inebriety

32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we <sup>r</sup> may preserve seed of our father.

r Mark 12. 19.

which led to it. Especially was his conduct to be condemned for suffering himself to be *twice* intoxicated, since it is difficult to conceive that he should not on the second evening have had some recollection of the consequences of his former indulgence. But if Lot cannot be acquitted from blame in this instance, much less can we find an adequate apology for the part enacted by his daughters. The very circumstance of their enticing their father to drink to excess is a proof that they were conscious of the sinfulness of the design, since they were aware that he would not yield to such an expedient in his sober senses. But on the other hand we may concede (1) That they were not actuated by a base and sensual desire in thus deceiving their father. Their preservation in the midst of the overthrow, which shows that they partook of Lot's faith, their declared object 'to preserve seed of their father,' and their not repeating the crime, evince that that they were influenced by some other motive than lust; and though this motive was founded on false and mistaken views, yet we may admit that it was in some degree excusable; for (2.) They were doubtless of opinion that it was the only means of preventing the extinction of the family. In making the proposition the first-born said to the younger, 'Our father is old and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth.' That is, there were none left in all the land of Canaan none among *their own family and kindred*, with whom they could hold it lawful to intermarry. That the words are to be taken with some such limita-

33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and

the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37 And the first-born bare a son, and called his name Moab: \* the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.

38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: † the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

s Deut. 2. 9. † Deut. 2. 19.

tion as this is evident, for they could not be ignorant that there were men in Zoar; but as they were now more than ever convinced that they belonged to an accursed race, they seem to have regarded it as both dangerous and criminal to form any matrimonial connections with them. As then there was now in their apprehension no *righteous* man in the land, it was the same to them as if there had been *none at all*, and so they express themselves; and in this we see a prevailing regard to *character* which is highly commendable. On the whole, though there was a large admixture of human infirmity in the proceeding and a gross practical distrust of Providence, yet the conduct of all parties admits of a strong plea of extenuation under the circumstances, which we may warrantably concede to it, especially as the sin was one of such a peculiar nature as never to be capable of becoming a *precedent*.

33. *He perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.* Heb. לֹא יָדָע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבִקְוָמָה *knew not in her lying down or in her rising up*; i. e. knew not, distinguished not, the person, either on her approach or at her departure. Others understand the writer's meaning to be that he had no per-

ception whatever of the incident from first to last, which we think less likely.

37, 38. *Called his name Moab.* Heb. מוֹאָב *Moab*, i. e. as generally interpreted, *of the father*.—† *Ben-ammi*.

Heb. בֶּן אַמִּי *ben-ammi*, i. e. *son of my people*. Both these names justify the view given above of the translation, viz. that it was merely *to preserve the family* that the daughters of Lot had recourse to the expedient. Hence as we do not find that they ever repeated the stratagem, so neither do they appear to have been at all *ashamed* of it, both which would have been natural had their motives been more unworthy than they were. The offspring, however, of this incestuous connection, whatever may be said in behalf of the connection itself, was certainly a *bad* one. These Moabites soon fell from the faith of God, and became idolaters, the worshippers of Chemosh and of Baal-peor, and were enemies to the children of Abraham. The same also is true of the Ammonites. As both these make afterwards a considerable figure in the sacred history, the inspired writer takes care to introduce, at this early period, an account of their *origin*.

REMARKS.—Although we have already drawn a large amount of prac-

tical inference from the foregoing chapter, yet we know not how to forbear adverting to some few additional lessons which the narrative teaches us.

(1.) The example of Lot forcibly inculcates both *the duty and the advantage of hospitality*. Men stand continually in need of each other, and are therefore bound to give countenance, to show kindness, to grant succour to their brethren of the race. We cannot move a single step through the world without being brought into connection with strangers, nor of course without having opportunities afforded us of bestowing or of receiving some instance of hospitable entertainment. To be careless or unkind in this respect, then, is to be at once unwise, inhuman, and unjust. Christianity has taken into its service every noble and valuable principle of our nature, and calls the whole catalogue of human virtues its own. As we are continually reminded, in the course of providence, of our being strangers and pilgrims upon earth, so we are strictly and repeatedly enjoined by the laws of the Gospel, to be attentive and kind to strangers. 'Be given to hospitality,' says Paul. 'Use hospitality one to another without grudging,' says Peter. 'Be not forgetful,' says the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, 'to entertain strangers,' a precept which he enforces by a motive drawn from the narrative before us, 'for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.' 'The houses of holy men,' Bp. Hall remarks, 'are full of these heavenly spirits whom they know not; they pitch their tents in ours, and visit us when we see not; and, when we feel not, protect us. It is the honour of God's saints to be attended by angels.'

(2.) We learn from this history of *what enormous depravity human nature is capable*. The pitch of wickedness to which Sodom and Gomorrah rose is such as to stagger belief were it

recorded on any other authority than that of inspiration. It is a sure sign that corruption has made great progress among any people when the *young* have cast off all reverence for age, and scruple not to expose their guilt to the eyes of those, from whom, of all others, they should hide it. But when the *aged* have lost all reverence for themselves; when they fear not to publish their shame to their sons; when the hoary head is found mingling in the licentious rabble with younger profligates, then indeed has guilt reached its last gradation, and we behold a spectacle which brings earth into close alliance with hell. Yet that this was the condition of Sodom on the eve of its destruction is clear from the narrative of Moses, and we feel but little wonder that the exhalations of such horrid sins should engender such a tempest of wrath in the heavens of the Lord God. What thankfulness should we not feel if we have been kindly withheld from attaining to so awful a pre-eminence in crime!

(3.) We learn also the *care and the favour with which God regards the good*. How precious are their lives in his sight! While he 'reserves the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished, the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.' Although it was signal folly and infirmity in Lot to go and take up his abode in Sodom, and though his deliverance is ascribed perhaps as much to the efficacy of Abraham's prayers as to his own merit, yet it would appear that while there he kept himself pure from the abounding iniquities, and instead of following a multitude to do evil, boldly rebuked them by his preaching and example. The consequence was that God was pleased to intimate that the fated city *could not be destroyed till Lot was safe!* In like manner, those who stand aloof from prevailing corruptions, and sigh over the abomina-

tions of the places where they live, shall have a mark set upon them before the destroying angel goes forth, and 'only with their eyes shall they see and behold the destruction of the wicked.'

(4.) The story admonishes those who are hastening towards heaven *not to be content to go alone*. Let them seek to take all they can along with them. Let them exert their influence to the utmost over all their friends and connections, in order that they may be instrumental to their salvation also. Let them especially manifest their conjugal and parental affection in this way. Derided as visionaries they may be by some, and forsaken in their progress by others, yet let them not for one moment intermit their diligence in the salvation of souls. If their labours prove effectual only to one or two, it will be a rich consolation to them in the day of judgment, that though many who were once dear to them have reaped the fruits of their indifference, yet there are others for whom they have 'not laboured in vain, nor run in vain.'

(5.) Sinners when *most careless and secure are often the nearest to danger*. When the sun rose upon Sodom, with the promise of a fine day, could any thing be farther from their thoughts than the overwhelming tempest which almost immediately began to pour down upon them? Had they had the most distant idea of their perilous situation, with what *avidity* would they have seized the opportunity of escape, and with what persevering efforts have exerted themselves to reach a place of safety. But their confidence destroyed them. Let the heedless take warning. The breath of the Lord may kindle a stream of brimstone before they are aware. 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

(6.) How forcibly are we here reminded of the indispensable necessity

of *personal exertion and persevering diligence* if we would escape the wrath to come. It had been declared to Lot that the threatened destruction could not be executed till he should have arrived at the place provided for him. But could he therefore say, 'I am in no danger; I may take my leisure; I may leave myself in God's hands.' Surely had he acted in so presumptuous a manner he would have perished with the ungodly multitude. When he had come out of Sodom, his exertions were no less necessary than before. He must flee to the mountain; he must escape as for his life; he must not delay a moment, lest he should be consumed. Thus it is with us. We cannot say, 'God has sent his only Son to save me, and therefore I have nothing to do.' We must rather say, 'God has offered to have mercy on me, and therefore I must work out my salvation with fear and trembling.' To found our hopes on the secret purposes of God, would be to delude ourselves, and insure our eternal ruin. We might as well hope to win a race without running, or to gain a battle without fighting, as to obtain heaven without *personal exertion*. Nor will *occasional exertion* avail. We must maintain a constant, vigorous, *persevering diligence* in the course we have begun. Had Lot remitted his endeavours like his wife, he also would have perished in like manner. We may 'run well for a season, and yet be hindered.' We may 'begin in the spirit, and yet end in the flesh.' We may 'escape the pollutions of the flesh, and yet be entangled therein, and overcome.' We may come out of Egypt, and yet never reach the promised land. He that endureth unto the end shall be saved. He that puts his hand to the plough and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.

(7.) The dishonourable end of Lot shows that *we are never out of danger*



## CHAPTER XX.

AND Abraham journeyed from <sup>a</sup>thence toward the south country, and dwelled between <sup>b</sup>Kadesh and Shur, and <sup>c</sup>sojourned in Gerar.

a ch. 18. 1. b ch. 16. 7, 14. c ch. 26. 6.

*while we are upon earth.* He whose righteous soul was grieved with the filthy conversation of the wicked while in a city, is drawn into the same kind of evils himself when dwelling in a cave! His whole history indeed from the time of his leaving Abraham furnishes an affecting lesson to the heads of families in the choice of habitations for themselves or their children. If worldly accommodations be preferred to religious advantages, we have nothing good to expect, but every thing evil. We may or may not lose our substance as he did; but what is of far greater consequence, our families may be expected to become mere heathens, and our own minds contaminated with the examples which are continually before our eyes. So was it with Lot, and so will it be very likely to be with all those that follow his example.

## CHAPTER XX.

Nothing is more worthy of admiration than the fidelity of the Scripture history. There is not a saint, however eminent, but his faults are reported as faithfully as his virtues; and from the testimony given we are constrained to acknowledge that the best of men, when they come into temptation, are weak and fallible as others if they be not succoured from above. We are habituated to behold Abraham as a burning and shining light; but here, as on a former occasion, we are called to view him under somewhat of an eclipse. We see the father of the faithful drawing upon himself a sharp rebuke from a heathen prince. But it is the justice of the reproof, rather than

2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, <sup>d</sup>She is my sister: And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and <sup>e</sup>took Sarah.

d ch. 12. 13. & 26. 7. e ch. 12. 15.

the reproof itself, which makes it so painful to contemplate, and the grounds of which we are now to consider.

1. *Abraham journeyed from thence.* That is, from the oak-groves of Mamre, where he had long resided, as appears from Gen. 13. 18.—18. 1.—¶ *Dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.* These places were all contiguous to the southern borders of Canaan. Gerar was the metropolis of the country of the Philistines. See map.

2. *Abraham said of Sarah his wife, &c.* Heb. אֵל שָׂרָה אִשְׁתִּי *to Sarah his wife.* The original word אֵל *el*, signifying to or unto, is occasionally rendered of or concerning. Thus, Jer. 27. 19, 'Thus saith the Lord concerning the pillars;' Heb. *to the pillars.* Ezek. 13. 16, 'The prophets of Israel which prophecy concerning Jerusalem;' Heb. *to Jerusalem.* Strictly parallel with this is the usage of the Gr. preposition *προς προς*, which primarily signifies to or unto. Thus, Heb. 1. 7, 'And of the angels he saith;' Gr. *unto the angels.* So v. 8, 'But unto the Son he saith;' Gr. *as to, concerning the Son.* Rom. 10. 21, 'But to Israel he saith;' Gr. *concerning Israel.* It appears evident from v. 5, that Sarah connived at the equivocation, and the fear which prompted her to do so seems to be tacitly censured by the Apostle, 1 Pet. 3. 6.—¶ *She is my sister.* She was, it is true, his sister in the same sense that Lot was his brother. She was his niece, the daughter of Haran, who was his brother by the father's side. Still it cannot be denied that there was a culpable dissimulation in his conduct,

and when we consider the circumstances under which it occurred, it is impossible to acquit him, to say the least, of the sin of gross unbelief. Having been called out of his native country to sojourn in a strange land, and depending upon God for direction and support, he went forth, not knowing whither he went. For the space of twenty-five years he had experienced the faithfulness and loving-kindness of his God. He had moreover recently received the most express promises that he should have a son by Sarah, who should be the progenitor of the Messiah. Yet on coming to Gerar his heart fails him for fear that the people will kill him in order to gain possession of his wife; who, it appears, though ninety years still retained a good degree of her former beauty; and in order to secure himself has recourse a second time to the expedient of equivocating in respect to his real relation to Sarah. This was a practical distrust of the protection of Jehovah for which we can find no apology. In what had God failed him that he should begin now to doubt of his faithfulness or power? Could the Philistines touch a hair of his head without the divine permission? Besides it ought to have occurred to him that he had once before been guilty of the same dissimulation, and had been reproved for it. Had the Philistines come suddenly upon him, and threatened to put him to death for his wife's sake we should the less have wondered that they were prevailed upon to conceal their relation to each other. But he had done the same thing many years before and had thereby ensnared Pharaoh king of Egypt, nor was he then delivered without a divine interposition, and a just rebuke from the injured monarch. Surely he ought to have profited by past experience. He should have been sensible of the evil of such a proceeding; and having been once rescued, as it were by a miracle, he

should never have subjected himself again to such danger reproach, and infamy. The repetition of so gross an offence, after such a warning and such a deliverance, increased its sinfulness an hundred-fold. We shudder, moreover, while we contemplate the *tendency* of this shameful prevarication. It was calculated to ensnare the people among whom he sojourned; while it exposed the virtue of Sarah to the extremest hazard. Had she been acknowledged for Abraham's wife, every one would have known the unlawfulness of entertaining a desire after her, and would have abstained from showing her any undue attention. But when she passed for an unmarried woman, every one was at liberty to insinuate himself into her affections and to seek to the uttermost an honourable connection with her. The event indeed shows what might reasonably have been expected from such a plot. The catastrophe, which came so near taking place, was no other than the natural consequence of the deceit which was practised. But what was its aspect and tendency with respect to the Messiah? This was a matter of very serious moment. But a short time, perhaps but a few days, before, God had promised to Abraham that within the year he should have a son by Sarah. Had Abimelech then proceeded to accomplish his purpose, and God withholden his interference, it would have remained a doubt at this moment whether the promises were ever fulfilled to Abraham, and whether the Messiah did indeed descend from his loins. Consequently the covenant made with Abraham, and all the promises made to him and his seed, would be left an awful uncertainty. If it would have been criminal in Abraham and Sarah to concert such a plan under *any* circumstances, how much more criminal was it to do so under the peculiar circumstances in which they then were? Happy

■ But <sup>f</sup> God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, <sup>h</sup> Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken: for she *is* a man's wife.

<sup>f</sup> Ps. 105. 14. <sup>g</sup> Job 33. 15. <sup>h</sup> ver. 7.

was it for Abraham, happy is it for us, that the 'Lord is our keeper.'—¶ *Abimelech.* Heb. אֲבִימֶלֶךְ *abi-melech*, i. e. father-king; the common title of the kings of Gerar, as Pharaoh was of the kings of Egypt. See Note on Gen. 12. 15. The term conveys a latent implication that in those early days the *kingly* rule was considered to be of a *paternal* character. Indeed all magistrates are spoken of in the Scriptures as *fathers* to their people. 2 Kings, 5. 13. Job, 29. 16. In later times this feature of the office has mostly disappeared.—¶ *Sent and took Sarah.* God so ordered it in his providence that Abraham should be chastened for the evil counsel which he devised, by Sarah's being exposed to the very danger from which, by a sinful evasion, he was endeavouring to shield her. Similar results may invariably be expected to follow the practical disbelief of which the people of God may be guilty. They can neither equivocate, nor doubt, nor disobey with impunity.

3. *God came to Abimelech in a dream by night.* That is, revealed himself in a dream by night. Chal 'And the Word from the face of God came to Abimelech in a vision of the night.' The Most High has access to all men's minds and can impress them by a dream, an affliction, or in any way which seems to him good. He did thus by Abimelech; he came to him in a dream. Dreams in general are the mere delusive play of the imagination, which is for the time released from the control of reason. Yet they are subject to the power of God, and in the early ages of the world, before the Scriptures were indited, were often

4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, LORD, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

<sup>i</sup> ch. 18. 23. ver. 18.

made the medium of communicating the most important truths to the children of men. Accordingly Abimelech dreamed that God addressed him in the words following, although we suppose that there was something in the nature of the impression that carried with it the evidence of its own divine origin and authority.—¶ *Behold, thou art a dead man, &c.* Heb. הִנֵּנְךָ מֵת *hinneka meth*. That is, thou art all but ■ dead man; thou art in the most imminent danger of death. The threatening however, is to be understood with an implied condition of impunity provided he desisted from his present purpose and restored the woman unharmed to her husband. Comp. Ezek. 33. 14, 15. Jon. 3. 4. It is evident from such a stern admonition that God regards adultery as a very heinous crime, and though originally addressed but to a single individual, yet it ought to be listened to as the voice of God sounding out his judgment respecting this aggravated sin in the ears of the whole human race.—¶ *For she is a man's wife.* Heb. וְהָיָה בְעֵלָהּ בָּעַל *for she is married to an husband*; or still more literally, *she is the possessed, subjected, or married one of a lord*; implying that her wedded fealty was wholly due to another; and that he could not take her without infringing upon a most solemn covenant relation previously subsisting between Abraham and her. The simple declaration, 'she is a man's wife,' ought instantaneously to extinguish the least motion of unhallowed desire towards an object made sacred and inaccessible by the very nature of the marriage compact.

5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: <sup>k</sup> in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

6 And God said unto him in

k 2 Kings 20. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

4. *Wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?* These words appear to contain a reference to the recent awful event of Sodom's overthrow, which must have greatly impressed the surrounding country. It is as if he had said, 'I am aware that thou hast slain a nation notorious for its filthy and unnatural crimes; but we are not such a nation; and in the present case all that has been done was done in perfect ignorance. Surely thou wilt not slay the innocent, as if they were guilty.' The language evidently carries with it the implication, which is abundantly warranted elsewhere in the Scripture, that from the close connection existing between them, the sins of rulers were often visited upon their people. See this illustrated in the case of David, 1 Chron. 21. 14, 17. The 'righteousness' which he here affirms of the nation in general is doubtless to be understood of *innocency or guiltlessness in this respect*, not of a universal freedom from sin. Abimelech would not presume to arrogate to himself or to his people entire exemption from moral evil, but merely that in the present instance neither he nor they had knowingly done wrong, and consequently were not condemned in their own consciences. We find a similar use of the word 2 Sam. 4. 11, where it unquestionably signifies *innocent*; 'How much more when wicked men have slain a *righteous* (צַדִּיק *tzaddik*) person in his house on his bed.'

5. *Said he not unto me, &c.* The fault is theirs not mine; I had both

a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for <sup>l</sup> I also withheld thee from sinning <sup>m</sup> against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

<sup>l</sup> ch. 31. 7. & 35. 5. Ex. 34. 24. 1 Sam. 25. 26, 34. <sup>m</sup> ch. 39. 9. Lev. 6. 2. Ps. 51. 4.

their words for it that they were brother and sister, and nothing was said of her being his wife.—¶ *In the integrity of my heart, &c.* Heb. בְּתַהֲלִי לִבִּי in the perfection, sincerity, or simplicity of my heart, &c. This is a paraphrastic way of expressing innocency of intention. Comp. Ps. 26. 6. —73. 13. Gr. 'In a pure heart and righteousness of hands have I done this.' Chal. 'In the rectitude of my heart and cleanness of my hands have I done this.'

6. *And God said unto him in a dream.* More correctly 'in the dream,' i. e. in the dream mentioned v. 3. It does not appear that there was a twofold communication made in this way.—¶ *I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thine heart, &c.* God in his answer admits Abimelech's plea of ignorance, and suggests that he was not charged with having yet sinned, although he sees fit to renew the threatening of death, in case he persisted in retaining Sarah, after being informed of the truth. It is intimated, however, that if he had come near her, he would, in so doing, have sinned against God, whether he had sinned against Abraham or not. But though acquitted on the whole, still as he and his people were not left without some marks of the divine displeasure, v. 17, 18, we are taught that the searching eye of Omniscience may behold admixtures of evil in that conduct which to general view, and in our own estimation, may be entirely free from fault, and that consequently in judging ourselves we

7 Now therefore restore the man *his* wife; <sup>a</sup> for he *is* a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and

<sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. 7. 5. 2 Kings 5. 11. Job 42. 8. Jam. 5. 14, 15. 1 John 5. 16,

are safe in taking it for granted that many offences escape the most rigid inquisition that we are able to make into the state of our hearts.—¶ *For I also withheld thee from sinning, &c.* Instead of 'for' a better rendering of the particle in this clause would be 'moreover.' A close inspection of the original, however, will probably suggest, as preferable to either, the following, which makes the present clause parenthetical; 'I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart (and I, even I, have withheld thee from sinning against me), therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.' In this declaration we read a striking proof of the mercy and condescension of Heaven. It was a signal kindness at once to Abraham and Abimelech thus to interpose an effectual restraint to the commission of a crime which might have been attended with the most disastrous consequences. God was thus propitious to the king because he had, in the main, *an honest intention*. He did not *design* to violate the sanctity of the marriage covenant. On this ground alone he was favoured with impunity from sin. The narrative teaches us, (1.) That absolute ignorance excuses from guilt. Yet let us not forget that the ignorance of which this can be said, must be *unavoidable*. Where the means of acquiring knowledge are possessed, and ignorance arises from neglecting them, or from aversion to the truth, it is so far from excusing, that it is in itself sinful. (2.) That great as the wickedness of men is upon the face of the earth, it would be much greater, were it not that God, by his providence, in innumerable instances, *withholds* them from it.

thou shalt live: and if thou restore *her* not, <sup>o</sup> know thou that thou shalt surely die, <sup>p</sup> thou and all that *are* thine.

<sup>o</sup> ch. 2. 17. <sup>p</sup> Num. 16. 32, 33.

How much reason then have we to be thankful for God's protecting and preserving grace! Had he taken no better care of us than we have done of ourselves, how many times should we have dishonoured our holy profession! Who that knows any thing of his own heart, is not conscious that he has at some times tampered with sin, and laid such snares for his own feet, that nothing but God's gracious and unlooked for interference has preserved him! And even when we have deeply offended our heavenly Father by our perverseness, and done that which, if exposed, would bring overwhelming disgrace upon us and our profession, how graciously has he prevented the *consequences* of such culpable lapses, and accepted our secret penitence, instead of 'putting us to an open shame?' Let us then, while we magnify the goodness of God, still tremble in view of our weakness, and ever feel the necessity of offering for ourselves the petition, 'Lead us not into temptation.' 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.'—¶ *Suffered thee not.* Heb. לא נתתיך *gave thee not*. 'Giving,' in the style of the Scriptures, is often used for *suffering, permitting*. Thus, Gen. 31. 7, 'But God *suffered* him not to hurt me;' Heb. *gave* him not. Ex. 3. 19, 'The king of Egypt will not *let* you go;' Heb. will not *give* you to go. Ps. 16. 10, 'Neither wilt thou *suffer* thine Holy One to see corruption;' Heb. *give* thine Holy One.



8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these

things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.

9 Then Abimelech called Abra-

Rev. 13. 7, 'And it was *given* unto him that he should make war with the saints;' i. e. it was *permitted* him; he received a providential license.

7. *He is a prophet.* Heb. נָבִיא *nabi*. Gr. προφητης *prophetes*, from προ *pro*, before and φημι *phemi*, to speak; i. e. one who speaks of things before they happen, or in other words a foreteller of future events. But that this was not the original notion of the word, its use in this place sufficiently proves. Abraham certainly was not a prophet in the present usual acceptation of the term. It here obviously means, in a more general sense, one who is favoured with the revelation and spirit of God, one who stands in a specially near relation to God, and who is consequently fitted to be the utterer or interpreter of his will. But as those who were in habits of intimacy with God by prayer and faith, were found the most suitable persons to communicate his mind to men, both with respect to the present and the future, hence the *nabi*, the intercessor, became in process of time a public instructor or preacher, and also the predictor of future events; because to men of this character God revealed the secret of his will. The idea therefore of an utterer of divine oracles, of an interpreter of the divine will, is the leading idea conveyed by the term *prophet*, and in conformity with this, Aaron as the spokesman or interpreter of Moses to the Egyptian king is termed his prophet, Ex. 7. 1. In the New Testament also, prophet is, for the most part, synonymous with interpreter, and prophesying with the interpretation or exposition of the Scriptures, 1 Cor. 14. 29. In reference to the fact before adverted to, that the office of a prophet implies

a special intercourse with heaven, Mai-monides, the chief of the Jewish doctors, remarks, that 'it is one of the foundations of the Law, to know that God maketh the sons of men to prophesy; and prophecy resideth not but in a man that is great in wisdom, and mighty in his virtuous qualities, so that his affections overcome him not in any worldly thing; but by his knowledge he overcometh his affections continually, and is a man expert in knowledge and of a very large understanding. On such a man the Holy Spirit cometh down; and when the Spirit resteth upon him, his soul is associated unto the angels, and he is changed to another man, and he perceiveth in his own knowledge that he is not as he was, but that he is advanced above the degree of other wise men.' (Ainsworth.)

—¶ *He shall pray for thee.* We are elsewhere informed that intercession for others was a special work of the prophets. Thus, Jer. 27. 18, 'If they be prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of Hosts,' &c. Comp. Jer. 14. 11.—15. 1. And this, if we conceive of it aright, will ever appear the most honourable and blessed part of the office. It is indeed a great distinction to be made, as it were, privy to the counsels of Heaven, an utterer or expounder of prophetic mysteries, but it is in fact a far higher privilege to act the part of a pious intercessor with God in behalf of men, and to be to them a procuring cause of spiritual and temporal mercies.—¶ *Thou shalt live.* Heb. חַיִּה *live thou*; the imperative instead of the future for the sake of emphasis. Thus, Am. 5. 4, 'Seek ye me, and ye shall live.' Heb. 'Live ye (imper.)' Ps. 37. 27, 'Do good and

ham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me, and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast

q ch. 26. 10. Exod. 32. 21. Josh. 7. 25.

dwell forevermore; i. e. ye shall dwell forevermore.

8. *Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, &c.* The efficacy of the oracle is here related. The divine admonition was not lost upon Abimelech. Deeply impressed with the dream, he summons before him at an early hour the principal men of his court, and imparts to them the particulars, at the relation of which they were 'sore afraid.' Some afflictions had already been laid upon them, of which they were doubtless keenly sensible, v. 13, and considering the late tremendous judgments of God upon Sodom, it is no wonder that they should be alarmed. An example, says Calvin, of such prompt obedience put forth by a heathen king takes away all excuse for our sluggishness, with whom the reproofs of God avail so little. To him the Most High appeared only in a dream. To us he daily calls by Moses, by prophets, by apostles, and by his only begotten Son; and yet how disgraceful that such testimonies should weigh less with us than a single vision did with him!—¶ *His servants.* That is, his counsellors, ministers, principal court-officers. See the word employed in this sense 1 Kings, 1. 2.—10. 5, 2 Kings, 6. 8; and compare the Note on Gen. 24. 2.

9. *Abimelech called Abraham and said unto him, &c.* We have here the well-grounded expostulation of Abimelech with Abraham. Were we to judge simply from this portion of the sacred narrative, we should perhaps be ready to think that Abraham had been the heathen, and Abimelech the prophet of the Lord. In the reproof administered

done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

r ch. 34. 7.

by this offended king we see much to admire and to commend. Considering the injury he had sustained, and the danger to which he had been exposed, it is truly wonderful that he should express himself with such mildness and moderation. The occasion would almost have justified the bitterest reproaches; and it might well be expected that Abimelech would cast reflections on the patriarch's religion; condemning *that* as worthless, or *him* as hypocritical. But not one reproachful word escapes his lips. The only phrase that has at all that aspect is the gentle sarcasm in his address to Sarah, 'I have given *thy brother* a thousand pieces of silver;' admonishing her thereby to call him no more by that deceitful name. But we are more especially struck with the utter abhorrence expressed by this heathen prince of a sin which is but too lightly regarded by the generality of those who call themselves Christians. It is observable that he never once complained of the punishment which he and his family had suffered, nor of the danger to which they had been exposed, but only of their seduction into sin. He considered *this* as the greatest injury that could have been done to him, and inquires with artless but earnest anxiety what he had done to provoke Abraham to the commission of it. The reply of the patriarch rather *explains* than *justifies* the grounds of his procedure, and presents to us a holy man in very humiliating circumstances. It was no little disgrace that a man of his character, a saint, a prophet of the most high God, should be reprov'd at all by

11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely \* the fear

s ch. 42. 18. Ps. 36. 1. Prov. 16. 6.

a heathen; but when we reflect how much occasion he had given for the reproof, it was dishonourable in the extreme. How unworthy of him was the manner in which his wife was restored to his hands! How must he blush to be told that he who should have been her protector, had been her tempter; that, in fact, he had put a price upon her virtue; and that instead of being willing, as he ought to have been, to die in her defence, he had in effect sacrificed her honour to his own groundless fears. It must not be forgotten that Sarah was actually given up to Abimelech, and that Abraham had forborne to claim her; so that he was answerable, not only for the consequences that did ensue, but for those also which, according to the common course of things, were to be expected. Moreover in what a light must he have appeared to himself and all around him, when he was informed that he had brought on Abimelech and all his household the severe chastisements which they had experienced, and had actually exposed them all to instantaneous death! What Abimelech had done, he had done 'in the integrity of his heart;' and if he and all his family had died for it, would not Abraham have been obliged to look upon himself as the legitimate author of their ruin? We need add no more to the degrading picture that has been exhibited. Methinks we see him standing overwhelmed with confusion, ashamed to lift up his head, and in deep abasement of spirit inwardly acknowledging the justice of the reproof.—¶ *That thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin.* That is, according to a Hebrew idiom, that thou shouldest do that which *was calculated*

of God *is* not in this place; and 'they will slay me for my wife's sake.

t ch. 12. 12. & 26. 7.

to bring sin upon me; which *tended* to it; which *exposed* me and my kingdom to the commission of a heinous crime. See Note on Gen. 27. 21, Ex. 7. 12, where this usage is fully illustrated.

11. *Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place.* Heb. אמרתי *amarti*, I said. The original word is used frequently not only for *speaking vocally*, but also for *speaking in the mind*, or thinking. Thus Ex. 2. 14, 'Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?' Heb. *Sayest* thou to kill me? 1 Kings, 5. 5, 'I *purpose* to build.' Heb. I *say* to build. Ps. 14. 1, 'The fool hath *said* in his heart, There is no God;' i. e. *hath come to the conclusion* that there is no God; or it may imply that he *hath entertained the wish* that there were none. Most ancient languages use terms which literally refer to oral communication, to indicate the act of thinking though no words are uttered. So Homer frequently employs the phrase, 'He spake to his mighty heart,' i. e. he thought within himself. For the unfavourable opinion which Abraham here confesses that he entertained of the king and people of Gerar, he had no other grounds than mere surmise. He had indeed just heard of the horrible impiety of Sodom; and he concluded perhaps that if a whole city so violently assaulted Lot for the purpose of gratifying their brutal inclinations with the men that were his guests, much more would some individuals be found in Gerar ready to destroy him for the sake of gaining access to a female so renowned for her beauty. But supposing him to have been actuated by such reflections, what right had he to judge so harshly of a people whom

12 And yet indeed *she is* my sister; she *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother: and she became my wife.

13 And it came to pass, when *God* caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; at every place whither we shall

come, *say* of me, He *is* my brother.

14 And Abimelech *took* sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

15 And Abimelech said, Behold, *my* land *is* before thee. dwell where it pleaseth thee.

y ch. 11. 29. x ch. 12. 1, 9, 11, &c. Heb. 11. 8.

y ch. 12. 13. z ch. 12. 16. a ch. 13. 9.

he did not know? Could not that God who had brought him out from an idolatrous country, and preserved Lot and Melchizedek in the midst of the most abandoned people, have some 'hidden ones' in Gerar also? Or, supposing that there were none who truly feared God, must they therefore be so impious as to murder him in order to possess his wife? There can be no doubt that many who are not truly religious, have well nigh as high a sense of honour, and as great an abhorrence of atrocious crimes as any converted man can feel; and therefore the reproach which he so unjustifiably cast on them returned deservedly on his own head.

12. Yet indeed *she is* my sister, &c. In what sense this was true is not perfectly apparent from the scriptures. The prevailing opinion of the Jews, which seems as probable as any, is, that the term 'sister' here is to be understood in the same latitude as 'brother' in other connections, viz. to denote a *niece*, and that Sarah was the grand-daughter of Terah, the daughter of Haran, and consequently the sister of Lot, being in fact no other than the Ischah mentioned Gen. 11. 29. Terah, it seems, had two wives, by one of whom he had Haran, the father of Lot and Sarah, and by the other Abraham, so that he might truly say of his wife that she was the daughter (i. e. descendant or grand-daughter) of his father but not of his mother; and it is entire-

ly accordant with scriptural usage to denominate such a relative a *sister*. Marriages of this kind, with persons thus nearly related, were not at this time prohibited by an express law, though they afterwards were. His excuse does indeed vindicate him from the charge of *falsehood*, but it still leaves him exposed to that of gross practical unbelief and of a quibbling equivocation altogether unworthy of a good man and a pattern of faith. See Note on Gen. 12. 13.

13. When God caused me to wander, &c. Heb. הַתַּעַר אֹתִי אֱלֹהִים when they, (even) God, caused me to wander. The phraseology is peculiar, the original word אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*, which is almost invariably joined with a verb singular, as remarked Gen 1. 1, being here used as the nominative to a verb plural. Some have proposed for this reason to render the term by 'angels,' a sense preferred by Calvin, implying that in all his wanderings he was under the tutelary care and conduct of angels; but we meet with modes of expression so very similar elsewhere, that there is perhaps no sufficient reason for departing from the usual signification, 'God.' Thus Gen 35. 7, 'There God appeared (בִּגְלוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים) unto him.' Heb. There they, (even) God, appeared unto him.' So likewise 2 Sam. 7. 23, comp. with 1 Chron. 17. 21, from which comparison it will be evident that a plurality of beings cannot be meant. The

16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given <sup>b</sup> thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver:

b ver. 5.

Gr. translates in the singular; 'When God (Θεός) brought me out from my father's house.' The Chal. is in the letter quite wide from the sense given in our own and most other versions; 'And it came to pass when the peoples wandered after the works of their own hands (i. e. fell into idolatry), the Lord applied me unto his fear, out of my father's house.' This has doubtless arisen from some misconstruction of the original. The Heb. term *התעורר* caused to wander, is probably here employed from the circumstance of God's not directing him in the outset to go to any certain place. On the contrary he was sent forth to go he knew not whither, and in allusion to this he is said to have 'wandered.' But what is 'wandering' to us, when led by divine guidance, is a definite course of journeying to the omniscient eye that watches over and orders our steps.—The fact which Abraham here mentions of an early precautionary arrangement between him and Sarah, would go far to set him right in Abimelech's esteem, as it would prove that he did not resort to the expedient because he thought worse of him and his people than of the other nations among whom he expected to sojourn. Neither the king nor people of Gerar were at all in his view when he proposed to adopt the artifice in question. Yet we can by no means commend this concerted plan of prevarication. It was a policy that savoured too strongly of the wisdom of the flesh, and implied a distrust in the overruling providence of God altogether unworthy of their character. Indeed the remark of Henry on this subject carries with it great plausibility; 'It may, for

' behold, he is to thee <sup>d</sup> a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved.

c ch. 26. 11. d ch. 24. 65.

ought I know, he suggested, that God denied Abraham and Sarah the blessing of children so long, to punish them for this sinful compact which they had made, to deny one another; if they will not own their marriage, why should God own it?

16. Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver. Heb. *אלף כסף* a thousand (of) silver, or a thousand silverlings. The word 'pieces' does not occur in the original, though it or 'shekels' is undoubtedly to be supplied, as is done by the Chal. Targum. The Gr. also has *χιλία διδραχμα* a thousand didrachmas or double drachms, i. e. a thousand shekels, as the Heb. *שכל* shekel is often rendered in the Sept. The original word comes from *שכל* shakal, to weigh, for which is derived by transposition of letters, the English 'scale,' an instrument of weighing. It is so called from the fact that the value of money was anciently reckoned by weight; for which reason the word 'shekel' is at once the name of a weight and of a coin. The Chal. terms a shekel *סלע* salin or selang, the origin perhaps of our word 'shilling,' and the value of the common shekel differed not much from the English shilling, as the shekel of the sanctuary was equivalent to about two shillings, or fifty cents, American money. Which is intended here, whether the common or sanctuary shekel, it is not possible to determine, but probably the former which would make the sum about \$250 of our currency.—¶ Thy brother. In calling Abraham her brother he makes use of her own language in a sarcastic way, and thus administers in a very skilful and yet delicate manner a word



of fitting rebuke for the deception in which she had participated.—¶ *He is to thee a covering of the eyes, &c.* Heb. *הוא-לך כסות עיניך* Chal. 'Behold, it is to thee a covering of honour, for that I did send to take thee, and have seen thee and all that are with thee.' Gr. 'These (i. e. the thousand shekels) shall be to thee for an honour of thy face, and to all (the women) that are with thee.' The passage is very variously explained by commentators according as the original *הוא* *hoo*, which in itself is ambiguous, is rendered by *he* or *it*. According to the latter mode, which is favoured by Chaldee, the meaning is, 'I have given thy brother that sum of money to purchase veils for thee and thine attendants that are married, that all who converse with thee here or elsewhere may know that thou art a married woman.' Veils were anciently worn in token of subjection to a husband, to which the Apostle, doubtless with this passage in view, thus distinctly alludes, 1 Cor. 11. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have *power* (*ἐξουσίαν* *authority*) on her head;' i. e. a veil or covering as a token of her husband's power or authority over her. Abimelech's thus giving money for the purchase of veils was a reproof to Abraham for permitting his wife to go without one; implying that if she had worn one, it would have prevented the unpleasant consequences that actually ensued. If with others we understand the pronoun of Abraham himself, it will still leave the sense substantially the same; for in the phrase 'He is to thee a covering of the eyes,' we still recognise an allusion to a veil, and take the purport to be, that he was the person in reference to whom she was to cover her eyes and face with a veil as a badge of his exclusive right to her subjection and wedded fealty. As a matter of course, she would then have a right to his protection, to his guardian care, and thus

would have every defence which she needed for the honour of her person, without resorting to any kind of stratagem for the purpose. The following remarks of the Editor of the Pict. Bible are not inconsistent with the above interpretation. 'We are not satisfied with any of the illustrations of this text that have fallen under our notice; and a reference to existing usages seems all that is necessary to render it quite intelligible. Without at present noticing the different sorts of veils, we may mention that it is customary for all the women inhabiting towns to go about closely veiled; while all the women of the different pastoral people who live in tents do not commonly wear veils, or at most only so far as to cover their foreheads and lower parts of the face, leaving the countenance exposed from the eyebrows to below the nose. It is evident, that although the use of complete coverings was known, the women of the pastoral patriarchs did not conceal their faces completely, except on extraordinary occasions; and if we assume that the same distinction existed between them and women of towns, as we find at present, we have the elucidation required. Abimelech, according to this view, intended to give the very sensible advice, that while Sarah and her women were in or near towns, they had better conform with the customs of towns, and wear the complete veil instead of that partial covering which left the eyes and so much of the face exposed. This will certainly seem the most obvious illustration to one who, in the towns which border on Arabia, has at the same time seen the towns-women glide along the streets completely muffled up, while the Arab females go about with their eyes and great part of their faces exposed to view.'—¶ *Thus she was reproofed.* Heb. *גנבה*. A clause of extreme ambiguity, on which, if we were writing merely for the learned, it would be

17 ¶ So Abraham \*prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare children.

18 For the LORD <sup>f</sup>had fast closed up all the wombs of the house

e Job 42. 9, 10. f ch. 12. 17.

easy to heap up a vast diversity of conflicting interpretations. But as we aim especially at the benefit of common readers, we shall, instead of encumbering our pages with an array of critical authorities, barely remark that we agree with Buxtorf in considering the original word a substantive instead of a verb, and that it is connected by the copulative *and* with *בסתר* covering, so as to make the purport of Abimelech's language to be that he had given the money as the price of a veil *and also* as a means of reproof.

17. So Abraham prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech, &c. Abraham by his prevarication had brought distress on Abimelech and all his household. Being now humbled by the rebuke he had received, he prayed to God for the removal of the judgments which he had been instrumental in procuring. By this means, as far as in him lay, he counteracted and reversed the mischief that he had done. It is but seldom that we can cancel in any degree the evil we have committed; but if any way whatever present itself, we should embrace it gladly and put forth our utmost endeavours to undo the injury we may have wrought. At all events, the course adopted by Abraham is open to us all. We may pray for those whom we have injured. We may beg of God to obliterate from their minds any bad impressions which either by word or deed we may have made on them. And if we find in them a kind forgiving spirit, we should so much the more redouble our exertions to obtain for them

of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

## CHAPTER XXI.

AND the LORD <sup>a</sup>visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah <sup>b</sup> as he had spoken.

a 1 Sam. 2. 21. b ch. 17. 19. & 18. 10, 14. Gal. 4. 23, 28.

the blessings of salvation, which will infinitely overbalance any evils that they may have suffered through our means.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1. And the Lord visited Sarah. Heb. *פָּקַד* *pakad*; bestowed upon her the promised mercy. Chal. 'The Lord remembered Sarah.' 'Visiting' is attributed to God in a two-fold sense; (1.) That of *showing mercy*, especially in the fulfilment of promises; as, Gen. 50. 24, 'God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land.' Ruth 1. 6, 'That the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.' Luke 1. 68, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.' (2.) That of *inflicting judgments* or *executing threatenings*; as, Ex. 28. 5, 'A jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.' Ps. 89. 33, 'Then will I visit their transgressions with a rod.' Num. 16. 29, 'If these die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me.' As the Psalmist assures us that 'children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward,' i. e. an heritage from him and a reward given by him, it is the dictate of a pious mind always to refer such an event to the special visitation of heaven, notwithstanding it takes place in accordance with the operation of established physical laws. But in the present case there was an additional reason for recognising such

2 For Sarah <sup>c</sup>conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, <sup>d</sup>at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born

c Acts 7. 8. Gal. 4. 22. Heb. 11. 11. d ch. 17. 21.

a special putting forth of omnipotence. Isaac was born of parents who were both superannuated, so that the gift of a child to them in their old age was a positive miracle. 'Moses herein commends the secret and unwonted power of God, which is superior to the law of nature; nor without good reason; for it concerns us greatly to know that mere gratuitous goodness reigns in the origin as well as in the progress of the church, and that children are born to God only in consequence of his good pleasure. Hence it is that Abraham was not made a father till impotency had befallen his body.' *Calvin.*—¶ *The Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.* This is an emphatic repetition, in which the writer, as it were, takes hold of the reader by the hand and detains him in order that he may more deeply consider how exactly the divine faithfulness had fulfilled, to the minutest particular, the promise long before given. A similar language, and suggesting the same sentiments, occurs Josh. 21. 45, in reference to the posterity of Abraham being put in possession of the promised land; 'The Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers—there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.' The same train of reflection also arises from the fact mentioned in the ensuing verse that the child was born '*at the set time of which God had spoken to him.*' And such will be our language, sooner or later, concerning all the good things promised to the church, or to us

unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, <sup>e</sup>Isaac.

4 And Abraham <sup>f</sup>circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, <sup>g</sup>as God had commanded him.

e ch. 17. 19. f Acts 7. 8. g ch. 17. 10, 12.

as individuals. 'Heaven and earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away.'

2. *For Sarah conceived, &c.* This is stated as explanatory of the manner in which the divine veracity affirmed in the first verse was established. God had *promised* that Sarah should conceive and bear a son, and she *did* thus conceive and bring forth; but it does not necessarily follow that the *time* of her conceiving was subsequent to the events related in the preceding chapter. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that this took place some weeks or months before (comp. ch. 17. 21), but it is mentioned here without regard to date merely as a fulfilment of the promise. It is not said where Isaac was born, nor are we expressly informed whether Abraham availed himself of Abimelech's generous invitation to remain in any part of the land that might seem good to him, ch. 20. 15, but as it appears from the latter part of the chapter that he abode for a considerable time in Abimelech's territories, though not at Gerar, the probability is that Isaac was born in Beersheba, v. 31.

3. *Abraham called the name of his son—Isaac.* In obedience to the direction given him ch. 17. 19, on which see Note. The name implies not so properly 'laughter' in the abstract, as 'one shall laugh,' or 'there shall be laughter,' i. e. joy.

4. *Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old.* The patriarch here pursues his accustomed tenor of obedience by subjecting his

5 And <sup>a</sup> Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

h ch. 17. 1, 17.

child to the painful rite of circumcision. Although as a parent and a man of humane feelings he must have shrunk from lacerating the flesh of a tender infant, yet his supreme deference to divine authority overcomes every natural instinct, and he does to his new-born child 'as God had commanded him.' Nothing is of higher value in the sight of God than an implicit observance of his positive precepts, and a disposition to adhere with punctilious strictness to the letter of the command, neither failing nor exceeding in the rule of duty. This is peculiarly important in the matter of sacramental institutions, where, as we learn from the example of the Papists, human perverseness is prone to fabricate new observances, and enforce them by promises and threatenings equally unknown to the Scriptures. Well would it be were they as much intent upon performing what God has *really* enjoined.

5. *And Abraham was an hundred years old.* After all delays and difficulties the promised mercies of Heaven come at last. The child of hope, of prayer, of faith at length is born, and the previous years of patient waiting compensated an hundred fold. Moses again makes mention of Abraham's advanced age in order the more forcibly to excite the attention of the reader to the consideration of the miracle. What could afford a more illustrious display of omnipotence than the fact, that after a childless union of more than sixty years, they should now, when exhausted nature in its common course forbade all hope of offspring, find themselves the parents of a smiling babe! Well therefore may the reader of the wondrous narrative be

6 ¶ And Sarah said, 'God hath made me to laugh, *so that* all that hear <sup>a</sup> will laugh with me.

i Ps. 126. 2. Isai. 54. 1. Gal. 4. 27.

called upon to join with them in magnifying the Lord, 'who placeth the desolate in families, and causeth the barren woman to become a joyful mother of children.' The joy of such an event can be better imagined than described. The birth of a child is always matter of unfeigned delight, at least to the mother's heart; what then must have been the solid, the heartfelt joy of Abraham and Sarah, on the birth of a son, the progenitor according to the flesh of the Saviour of the world, given by promise and raised up by miracle!

6. *God hath made me to laugh, &c.* Heb. <sup>לִי עָשָׂה צֶחֶק</sup> *hath made to me laughter*; i. e. hath given me occasion of laughter, by which she means simply *rejoicing*. 'A woman advanced in years, under the *same circumstances*, would make a similar observation: 'I am made to laugh.' But this figure of speech is also used on any *wonderful* occasion. Has a man gained any thing he did not expect, he will ask, 'What is this? I am made to laugh.' Has a person lost any thing which the moment before he had in his hand, he says, 'I am made to laugh.' Has he obtained health, or honour, or wealth, or a wife, or a *child*, it is said, 'He is made to laugh.' 'Ah, his mouth is now full of *laughter*; his mouth cannot contain all that laughter.' *Roberts. Comp. Ps. 126. 1, 2.* The expression carries an allusion to Isaac's name (יִצְחָק *yitzhak*) and to the circumstance mentioned Gen. 17. 17—19, on which it was founded. It is a mode of speech which not only shows how sincerely she recognised the propriety of Abraham's laughing on the occasion referred to, and how

7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? <sup>1</sup> for I have borne *him* a son in his old age.

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a

1 ch. 18. 11, 12.

cordially she assents to the name thence bestowed on the child, but intimates also that God had made *her*, as well as Abraham, to laugh; which was in fact a virtual condemnation of her former incredulity. We meet in the prophets with some striking allusions to this incident where Sarah is considered a symbol of the church. Thus, Is. 54. 1, 'Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear,' &c. Comp. Is. 51. 2, 3. Gal. 4. 22—23.—¶ *All that hear will laugh with me.* Will sympathize in my joy, and tender to me their congratulations. To this also, the prophet alludes, Is 66. 10. 'Rejoice ye *with Jerusalem*, and be glad *with her*, all ye that love her; rejoice with joy *with her*;' where the *Jerusalem* mentioned is expressly said by the Apostle, Gal. 4. 22. 27, to be mystically shadowed out by Sarah.

7. *Who would have said, &c.* It would have exceeded the bounds of belief; it could never have entered into the thoughts of a mortal. It is a virtual acknowledgment that God's mercies are as high above our thoughts, as they are above our deserts. Yet the fact *had been* previously announced not only to Abraham, but also to her, and she was bound to believe it, strange and incredible as it might appear. Probably she was now deeply abased in her own eyes in view of her former unbelief. The church expresses a similar admiration, Is. 49. 21, 'Who hath begotten me these?—Behold I was left alone; these, where had they been?'

8. *The child grew and was weaned, &c.* Heb. *וַיִּגְבַּל* *vayiggamēl*. The

great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned.

9 ¶ And Sarah saw the son of Hagar <sup>m</sup> the Egyptian, <sup>n</sup> which she had borne unto Abraham, <sup>o</sup> mocking.

m ch. 16. 1. n ch. 16. 15. o Gal. 4. 22.

primary idea of the verb is that of *return, requital, restitution*. How it came to be applied to the act of weaning a child it is difficult to say. As it is in several instances employed to denote the *yielding* or *returning* of fruits and flowers to the earth when fully ripened, Parkhurst suggests that it is used in like manner of a mother or nurse, who at the proper season *drops* the child, as it were, from the breast and *returns* it to the father; thus making out a striking resemblance between the animal and vegetable world. Adam Clark remarks that our verb *to wean* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *awendan*, which signifies *to convert, transfer, turn from one thing to another*; and hence *to wean* is *to turn a child from the breast* in order to receive another kind of nourishment. This is perhaps a correct view of the import of the English word, but when he says that this is the exact import of the Heb. *גָּמַל* *gamal* in the text, the assertion is stronger than the evidence will warrant. The etymology of the term, however, is not a point of any great moment, as there can be no doubt of its being here correctly rendered. At what time children were weaned among the ancients is a question that admits of much dispute. 'Most oriental people,' says the editor of the Pictorial Bible, 'suckle their children much longer than is customary in Europe, and the same custom may be traced in the Bible. When Samuel was weaned, he was old enough to be left with Eli, for the service of the tabernacle; in 2 Chron. 26. 16, nothing is assigned for the pro-



vision of the children of priests and Levites until after three years of age, which renders it probable that they were not weaned sooner; and in the second book of Maccabees ch. 7. 27, a mother says, 'O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee suck three years and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age.' When the Persian ambassador was in England he attributed to the custom of early weaning the greater forwardness of our children in mental acquirements than those of his own country; where male children are often kept to the breast till three years of age, and never taken from it till two years and two months. The practice is nearly the same in other Asiatic countries. In India the period is precisely three years. But everywhere a girl is taken from the breast sooner than a boy: in Persia, at two years; in India, within the first year. When the child is weaned, the Persians make 'a great feast,' to which friends and relations are invited, and of which the child also partakes, this being in fact his introduction to the customary fare of the country. The practice is the same among the Hindoos.'

9. *Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian—mocking.* Heb. מִצְחֶק *metzahék*; a word in this connection of rather dubious import. It is derived from the same root with *Isaac* (צַחֵק *tzahák*) which signifies *to laugh*, and here perhaps has the sense of *laughing at, deriding*. Both the Gr. and the Chal. render by the word 'play'—'saw the son of Hagar *playing* with Isaac;' but by this can scarcely be understood the mere sportive gambols of children, which would be too frivolous an occasion for the adoption of such a harsh measure as Sarah proposed. We are rather to conceive of it as a *wanton teasing*, something which in its own nature was peculiarly calculated to irritate and vex; and it is not a little wor-

thy of notice that we find the Gr. word for *playing* (παίζοντα), which is here employed, occurring also, 2 Sam. 2. 14—16, in the sense of *fighting*; 'And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men arise and *play* (παίξασθαι) before us,—And they caught every one his fellow by the hand, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together.' On the whole there can be no doubt that the Heb. phrase implies a contemptuous and malignant treatment, a bitter and sarcastic jeering, sufficient to constitute a very grave offence. This is clear from the language of Paul, Gal. 4. 29, who says that Ishmael *persecuted* Isaac; and he is here specially designated as 'the son of Hagar the Egyptian,' to intimate that the predicted four hundred years' affliction of Abraham's seed by the Egyptians, commenced at this time in the insults and taunts of Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian woman. 'The fact would seem to be, that Ishmael, now a grown-up lad of about sixteen or seventeen, and who up to the age of fourteen had expected to be the sole heir of his father, was not quite satisfied by being superseded in the inheritance by his younger brother, whom he does not appear to have treated with all the consideration which Sarah required. Sarah, it is evident, had little confidence in the promise of a son which had been made to Abraham; and probably, until the birth of Isaac, treated Ishmael as the hope of Abraham's house, if not as her own son. But the birth of Isaac made a great change in Ishmael's condition; and the change is quite conformable with the usages which still prevail in the East, where the son of a female slave would certainly be superseded by the son of a free woman, afterwards born. Nay, this feeling goes further; for, leaving slaves out of the question, in Persia, if a man has more than one wife—and he may have four, all equal—ly his wives in the eye of the law—the

10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, <sup>p</sup> Cast out this bond-woman, and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not

p Gal. 4. 30. ch. 25. 6. & 36. 6, 7,

son of the wife whose family is of the most distinction often obtains the preference over the others. Thus, the late king of Persia, Futteh Ali Shah, overlooked his eldest son (a sort of Persian Ishmael in character), and nominated to the inheritance of the throne his second son Abbas Meerza, merely because the mother of the latter was a highly connected lady of his own tribe. The son of this Abbas Meerza is now king of Persia.' *Pict. Bible*. From what follows it would appear that Sarah had evidence that this rude and insolent conduct was in some measure abetted or countenanced by Hagar; hence the severity of her treatment towards her.

10. *She said unto Abraham, Cast out this woman and her son.* Expel her from thy house and family, and preclude her son from any participation in the inheritance. This is perhaps the most obvious sense of the words, yet as the Heb. גֵּרֶשׁ *gerēsh* is in several instances applied to the act of *divorcing* or *repudiating* a wife, Lev. 21. 7, 14.—22. 13. Is 57. 20, we shall probably more correctly understand it here as expressing Sarah's wish that Abraham would divorce Hagar, or at least perform some kind of *legal act* by which Ishmael might be excluded from all claim to the inheritance. This is a very plausible view of the import of the passage, for the *mere fact* of his remaining at home would not of itself entitle him to the inheritance, nor would the *mere fact* of his present expulsion deprive him of such a title in case it had existed. A formal or actual *divorce* was evidently the requisite measure, and such a measure necessa-

be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, <sup>q</sup> because of his son.

q ch. 17. 18.

rily involved the disinheriting of the son of the divorced woman, whose right of heirship flowed solely from his mother as a *married* mother. Such a step would, as a matter of course, require a *separation* of the parties, and viewed in this light the affair was not of a character to subject Abraham justly to the charge of cruelty in sending away the Egyptian mother and her child. In the nature of the case she could not remain, and Sarah be satisfied; so that a dismissal was unavoidable, and nothing can be adduced from the narrative to show that it was not ordered with as much kindness and generosity as the circumstances would admit.—Sarah, though right in her judgment respecting the means of obtaining domestic peace, seems to have been too precipitate, and too imperious in her demands for the expulsion of Hagar and her son. The consequence was, that Abraham demurred about carrying it into execution. He indeed had different feelings from Sarah. Sarah's regards were fixed exclusively on Isaac. She did not consider Ishmael as a son, but rather as an intruder and a rival. But Abraham, being the father of both, felt a paternal affection towards each; nor was he indifferent towards Hagar, whom he considered and lived with as a legitimate wife. Perhaps too he suspected that Sarah's proposal originated in an irritation of temper, and that less severe measures would in a little time satisfy her mind. As may well be supposed, he was exceedingly grieved at the thought of proceeding to such extremities, but finding her resolutely bent upon it, he committed the matter to God, and sought direction from

12 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman ; in all

that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice : for <sup>r</sup> in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

r Rom. 9. 7, 8. Heb. 11. 18.

above. The result is stated in the ensuing verse.

12. *For in Isaac shall thy seed be called.* Heb. כִּי בִיִּצְחָק יִקְרָא לְךָ זֶרַע *in Isaac shall seed be called to thee.*

This is explained by the Apostle, Rom. 9. 7, 8, 'Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called ; that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God : but the children of the promise, these are counted for the seed.' It is, therefore, a limitation of Abraham's seed, emphatically so called, to the line of Isaac and his descendants, to the exclusion of Ishmael. God does not require Abraham to acquiesce in Sarah's proposal because he approved the spirit which prompted it, but because it accorded with his counsel and his repeated declarations that all the blessings of the covenant were to belong pre-eminently to Isaac. 'We must not refuse to join in doing what God commands, however, contrary it may be to our natural feelings, nor on account of the suspicious motives of some with whom we are called to act.' *Fuller.*—But it is not sufficient to see in the incident here related merely a domestic occurrence. There is a gospel mystery contained in it, and here as in multitudes of other passages we are indebted to the New Testament for the insight which we possess into the meaning of the Old Testament. The inspired Apostle, Gal. 4. 22—30, teaches us to consider this whole history as an allegory ; although it is contended by some able critics that the words of Paul (*ἀρτινα εἶσιν ἀλληγορούμενα*) ought rather to be rendered 'which things are allegorized,' or, 'which things *may be alle-*

gorized ;' implying, not that the events recorded were originally *designed* to shadow out certain other facts or truths, but merely that they are *capable* of being so viewed, and really are so viewed, by the sacred writer. (See Pierce's Dissert. on Gal. 4th. in his work on the Epistles). But however this may be, we are clearly taught by the construction which the Apostle puts upon it that the bond-woman represents the Mosaic covenant entered into at Mount Sinai, which brought forth children in a state of bondage ; but Sarah, the free woman, shadowed out the Christian covenant, which brings forth children in a state of liberty. The natural seed of the former represents all who are born after the flesh ; the spiritual seed of the latter, that is, the child of promise, represents those who are born after the Spirit. On this ground we might have formed a reasonable conjecture, that every one who resembled Ishmael would be hostile to those who resembled Isaac. But the Scriptures supersede all conjecture on this point ; for they affirm, in reference to this very history, that 'as *then* he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is *now*.' There is an innate contrariety between the two classes ; the same things are grounds of offence to the carnal man in this day, as were in the days of Ishmael ; and this our Lord has expressly confirmed by saying, 'because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore* the world hateth you.' It appears, moreover, from the Apostle's interpretation that we must be children of promise in order to belong to the church of Christ. The mere circumstance of having de-

31 And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave

s ver. 18. ch. 16. 10. & 17. 20.

scended from Christian parents, or having received the seal of the Christian covenant, or making a profession of the Christian faith, will not constitute us Christians, nor give us a title to share in the heavenly inheritance. 'The son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman;' which is in effect a sentence of expulsion passed not only on the unbelieving Jewish church, but on the whole collective body of natural and unconverted men, while it is an exclusive grant of heaven and happiness to the children of promise. Others may enjoy church privileges and make religious professions, but they only who in this world rested on the promises as their one ground of hope and joy, shall experience their accomplishment in the world to come. Doubtless it will be grievous, so to speak, to our heavenly Father to disinherit so many of his professed children, for 'he hateth putting away,' and he swears that he 'has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but would rather that he would turn from his wickedness and live,' still the decree is gone forth and cannot be reversed; we must be living members of Christ's church below, before we can inherit his kingdom above.

13. *Will I make a nation.* Heb. לָגַר אֶשְׂרֵמֶנּוּ *will I set or put him to a nation*; i. e. a great nation, as the Gr. renders it, 'I will make him for a great nation.' This is but a renewal of the promise made ch. 16. 10, and 17. 20, on which see Notes.

14. *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took, &c.* From which it is probable that the divine di-

*it* unto Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

t John 8. 35.

rection recited above was given in the night in a vision or dream. His 'rising early in the morning' in this and similar instances is a striking proof of the readiness and alacrity with which he made haste to obey the heavenly mandate. To part with his son was no doubt like rending away his own bowels, but being accustomed to obedience, he controls the paternal affection which he could not extinguish. And here is unquestionably one of the severest trials of faith and piety, when we are called to subject to the will of God those primary instincts of our nature which are in themselves neither sinful nor harmful. But the children of Abraham are to prepare themselves for such ordeals. — 'Bread' is probably here to be understood, as elsewhere, as a general term for all kinds of eatables, of which we may suppose as large a quantity was provided as they could conveniently carry; and so also of the water; so that we know of no sufficient foundation for the remark of Hunter, that 'we are more surprised at the slender provision with which Hagar and Ishmael are dismissed, than at the dismissal itself.' It would indeed be surprising if the patriarch had loaded them with more provisions than they could carry, and the text affords no evidence that he furnished them with any less. — םֶבֶר *Bottle*; i. e. sack. Heb. חֶמֶת *hemath*. See Note on Josh. 9. 4. 'There are several Hebrew words which our translation equally renders 'bottle,' but which are not only different from each other but all different from the idea which the word 'bottle' conveys to our minds. We shall endeavour to dis-

criminate the different sorts as we proceed; but may here observe generally, that the people of Asia, west of the Indus, use the skins of animals, on a journey, for carrying water and other liquids, as well as, in general, other articles of provision which they are obliged to carry with them in their journeys across the deserts or thinly-inhabited plains. The preference of such vessels is well grounded. Earthen or wooden vessels would soon be broken in the rough usage which all luggage receives while conveyed on the backs of camels, horses, or mules: and if metal were used, the contents would be boiled or baked by the glowing heat of the sun. Besides, such skins exclude the encroachments of ants, which swarm in those countries, and also effectually guard against the admission of that fine impalpable dust or sand which forms so great an annoyance to travellers in Asia, defying all ordinary safeguards, and spoiling every necessary of life to which it gains access. The greater portability of such skins is another advantage. The skins of kids and goats are those used for ordinary purposes. The head being cut off, the carcase is extracted without opening the belly, and the neck serves as the mouth of the vessel thus formed. The thighs, which are suffered to remain, serve as its handles, and also to give hold to the straps by which it is fastened to the luggage or saddle of a mounted traveller; or by which, being thrown across the *shoulder* (see text) and breast, it is slung to the back of a pedestrian. The heat of the climate, and the scarcity of streams and wells, render it indispensable for all travellers to carry water with them. When a party is large, and the prospect of a fresh supply of water distant, large skins of the camel or ox, two of which are a good load for a camel, are used. Goat-skins serve in ordinary circumstances. Individual travellers, whether

in large or small parties, mounted or on foot, usually carry a kid-skin of water, or else a sort of bottle of prepared leather, shaped something like a powder-flask. Hagar's bottle was doubtless a kid-skin, slung across her back from her shoulder. Some say it was a goat-skin; not being aware that a goat-skin of water is a good load for a man, and is what no one thinks of carrying on his back to any distance. Others contend that the etymology of the word and Egyptian usage (Hagar being an Egyptian) require the bottle to be an earthen vessel; but the etymology does not imperatively demand this; and it is certain that no one ever does, or probably ever did, personally carry an earthen vessel of water *in a journey* across a desert: what the Egyptians or others did or do in *fetching water* from wells or streams to their homes is quite another thing.' *Pict. Bible*.—¶ *And the child*. So called, though not with the strictest propriety, as he was now at least sixteen years of age, and old enough to be, if not a protector, at least a useful attendant to Hagar. Either 'boy,' 'lad,' or 'stripling' would answer better to the sense of the term (יָלֵד *yēled*) in this place. Of course it is an entirely erroneous construction to suppose that Abraham put the child, as well as the provisions, upon his mother's shoulder. It was only the latter that she was required thus to carry. The word 'child' depends upon the foregoing 'took' or 'gave' and not upon 'putting.' Let the clause 'putting it on her shoulder' be included in a parenthesis, and the sense is plain. So Ex. 29. 3, 'And thou shalt put them (i. e. the unleavened cakes) into one basket, and bring them in the basket with the bullock and the two rams;' where the words 'in the basket' must be made parenthetical or we shall be obliged to understand that the bullock and the rams were put into the basket with the cakes.—¶ *And wandered*



*in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.* Beer-sheba signifies the 'well of an oath,' or 'the well of seven,' so called afterwards on account of the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech (see v. 31). It was at the extremity, towards the desert, of the subsequent kingdom of Abraham's descendants, and the extent of which was proverbially described by naming the two extreme towns, Dan and Beer-sheba (see Note on ch. 14. 14.) It was twenty miles south of Hebron. The town afterwards built there was given to the tribe of Judah by Joshua (Josh. 15. 28); but the allotment of that tribe being found disproportionately large, it was with other portions of Judah's inheritance, transferred to Simeon (Josh. 19. 2, 9). We know nothing about the town; but it was occupied by a Roman garrison in the time of Eusebius and Jerome. 'The wilderness of Beer-sheba,' probably denotes the desert country beyond Beer-sheba, towards the Desert of Paran, to which Hagar and Ishmael proceeded after they had recovered from the effects of thirst and exhaustion. As, however, much perplexity arises to the reader from the mention of an immense number of wildernesses and deserts, we may observe that the word מִדְבָּר *midbar*, rendered sometimes 'wilderness,' and sometimes 'desert,' is of extensive application in Hebrew. It denotes not only the dry, barren, or sandy tracts to which we should restrict the term 'desert,' but generally all uncultivated lands, mountainous tracts, pasture-grounds, and the common lands for wood and pasturage near towns. Thus there was scarcely a town without a 'desert' belonging to it, whence arises the frequent mention of deserts in the very heart of that fertile country. This explains the allusions to the rich pastures, and even the beauty of the wildernesses or deserts. See Ps. 64. 13. Jer. 9. 10. Joel 1. 20; and Calmet's

Dictionary, art. 'Desert;,' also Gesenius on מִדְבָּר. On the proper deserts see Note on v. 21. Whether this 'wilderness of Beer-sheba' was directly in the way to the place of her destination, or whether she went thither in consequence of having 'wandered' or *lost her way*, it is not possible to determine. Nor is it certain that 'wandered' here is to be understood in any other sense than that of *journeyed*. It would seem, however, most probable that she departed with some definite place in view, perhaps Egypt her native country. It may absolve Abraham from the charge of cruelty on this occasion, if we bear in mind not only that the transaction was altogether in accordance with the manners of those times, but also that it was no difficult thing for any person to find a livelihood in this early age of the world. Those who had flocks found ground enough to spare in every country to maintain them; and creatures were so numerous, that a person who had no flocks, might, in the wilderness and in uncultivated places, kill enough of all sorts for his maintenance, without injuring any body: and accordingly we find, that Ishmael chose to reside in the wilderness, where he became an archer. From the sequel it appears, that Hagar met with no great difficulty in providing for herself and son; nor did Ishmael fare any worse than was common for the younger sons to do in those days, when they were dismissed, in order to settle in different parts of the world. Jacob was dismissed in the same manner by Isaac, without servants, or attendants.

15. *And the water was spent, &c.* Whatever were her original intentions, she was soon reduced to great distress. The bread might not be exhausted, but the water was; and no spring being to be found in this inhospitable place, she and Ishmael appear to have walked about, till he, overcome of thirst, could walk no longer. She supported

15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

16 And she went, and sat her down over against *him*, a good

way off, as it were a bow-shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against *him*, and lifted up her voice, and wept.

him, it seems, as long as she could, but fearing he would die in her arms, she cast him under a shrub, just to screen him from the scorching sun, and went to a distance to spare her eyes the agonizing sight of his dissolution. The anguish of such a situation can be better imagined than described. In this our temperate climate, surrounded as we are with perpetual verdure and with every object that can delight the eye, we can scarcely conceive the horrors encountered by the hapless traveller when crossing the trackless sands, and exposed to all the ardours of a vertical sun. The most recent as well as the most graphic description of a desert, which admirably illustrates the present passage, is that given by the enterprising traveller, M. Belzoni, whose researches have contributed so much to the elucidation of the Sacred Writings. Speaking of a desert crossed by him in Upper Egypt, on the western side of the Red Sea, and which is parallel with the great desert traversed by the Israelites on the eastern side of that sea, he says, 'It is difficult to form a correct idea of a desert, without having been in one: it is an endless plain of sand and stones, sometimes intermixed with mountains of all sizes and heights, without roads or shelter, without any sort of produce for food. The few scattered trees and shrubs of thorns, that only appear when the rainy season leaves some moisture, barely serve to feed wild animals, and a few birds. Every thing is left to nature; the wandering inhabitants do not care to cultivate even these few plants, and when there is no more of them in one place they go to another. When these trees be-

come old and lose their vegetation, the sun, which constantly beams upon them, burns and reduces them to ashes. I have seen many of them entirely burnt. The other smaller plants have no sooner risen out of the earth than they are dried up, and all take the colour of straw, with the exception of the plant *harrack*; this falls off before it is dry. Generally speaking, in a desert, there are few springs of water, some of them at the distance of four, six, and eight days' journey from one another: and not all of sweet water: on the contrary, it is generally salt or bitter; so that if the thirsty traveller drinks of it, it increases his thirst, and he suffers more than before. But, when the calamity happens, that the next well, which is so anxiously sought for, is found dry, the misery of such a situation cannot be well described. The camels, which afford the only means of escape, are so thirsty that they cannot proceed to another well: and, if the travellers kill them, to extract the little liquid which remains in their stomachs, they themselves cannot advance any farther. The situation must be dreadful, and admits of no resource. Many perish victims of the most horrible thirst. It is then that the value of a cup of water is really felt. He that has a *zenzabia* of it is the richest of all. In such a case there is no distinction. If the master has none, the servant will not give it to him; for very few are the instances where a man will voluntarily lose his life to save that of another, particularly in a caravan in the desert, where people are strangers to each other. What a situation for a man, though a rich one, perhaps the

owner of all the caravans! He is dying for a cup of water—no one gives it to him—he offers all he possesses—no one hears him—they are all dying—though by walking a few hours farther they might be saved. If the camels are lying down, and cannot be made to rise, no one has strength to walk; only he that has a glass of that precious liquor lives to walk a mile farther, and, perhaps, dies too. If the voyages on seas are dangerous, so are those in the deserts. At sea, the provisions very often fail; in the desert it is worse: at sea, storms are met with; in the desert there cannot be a greater storm than to find a dry well: at sea, one meets with pirates—we escape—we surrender—we die; in the desert they rob the traveller of all his property and water; they let him live, perhaps, but what a life!—to die the most barbarous and agonizing death. In short, to be thirsty in a desert, without water, exposed to the burning sun without shelter, and *no hopes* of finding either, is the most terrible situation that a man can be placed in, and one of the greatest sufferings that a human being can sustain: the eyes grow inflamed; the tongue and lips swell; a hollow sound is heard in the ears, which brings on deafness, and the brains appear to grow thick and inflamed: all these feelings arise from the want of a little water. If unfortunately any one falls sick on the road, there is no alternative; he must endure the fatigue of travelling on a camel, which is troublesome even to healthy people, or he must be left behind on the sand, without any assistance, and remain so till a slow death come to relieve him. What horror! No one remains with him, not even his old and faithful servant; no one will stay and die with him; all pity his fate, but no one will be his companion.' (*Belzoni's Narrat.* pp. 341—343.)—

¶ *She cast the child.* Heb. תשלך *tashlêk*. The original term, though

sometimes, perhaps generally, conveying the idea of a somewhat rough and forcible projection, yet in this and several other instances has undoubtedly the import of a gentle depositing, laying down, or suffering to repose. Thus Ps. 55. 22, 'Cast (השלך) thy burden upon the Lord;' i. e. cause or suffer to lie. Jer. 38. 11, 'Let them down (ירשליר) by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah;' which expresses not a violent but a gentle demission.

16. *Sat her down over against him, a good way off, &c.* A more finished picture of distress it would be difficult to adduce. The bitter cries and flowing tears of the afflicted mother, with the groans of her famishing son, are heard, and seen, and felt in a manner as though we were present. Had there been any ear to hear, any eye to pity, or any hand to help the sufferers, their cries and tears might have been mingled with hope; but as far as human aid was concerned, their condition was apparently desperate. But in God the fatherless and the friendless find mercy. Lost in the wilderness, outcast from society, ready to perish with hunger and thirst, they meet with the notice of Him who feeds the ravens, and without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground.—For a vivid description of a heart-rending scene of suffering in the desert very nearly resembling this, see 'Scripture Illustrations,' p. 29.—¶ *As it were a bow-shot.* 'This,' says Mr. Roberts, 'is a common figure of speech in their ancient writings—'The distance of an arrow—so far as the arrow flies.' The common way of measuring a short distance is to say, 'It is a call off;' i. e. so far as a man's voice can reach. 'How far is he off?' 'O, not more than three calls;' i. e. were three men stationed within the reach of each other's voices, the voice of the one farthest off would reach to that distance.'

17. *God heard the voice of the lad.* Although it is no where expressly said

17 And <sup>u</sup> God heard the voice of the lad: and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for <sup>w</sup> I will make him a great nation.

u Ex. 3. 7. w ver. 13.

that Ishmael put forth his voice either in sobs or groans, yet it is very conceivable that he did. Such a supposition, however, is not necessarily required by the purport of the language. His suffering and perishing condition had in itself a 'voice' which called loudly upon the divine compassion, and which God could hear, even though we suppose the lad to have been so overcome with hunger, thirst, and weariness, as to be incapable of any vocal utterance. A voice with the sacred writers is sometimes equivalent to a *meaning, scope, or purport*. Thus Ex. 4. 8, 'If they will not believe thee, nor hearken to the voice of the first sign;' i. e. regard the *meaning or drift*. Ps. 19. 3, 'There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard;' i. e. where their *purport* is not intelligible. In like manner God may be said in this case to have heard the voice of the lad in as far as he regarded the *import of his condition*, and pitied and purposed to relieve him.—¶ *The Angel of God called, &c.* That is, the uncreated Angel; the Angel-Jehovah; the same who appeared to Hagar on a former occasion. Gen. 16. 7.—¶ *God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.* Heb. בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא שָׁם in that where he is; i. e. not merely in the *place*, but in the *condition*, in which he is; he hath heard his voice in observing and compassionating the afflictive circumstances to which he is reduced.

19 And <sup>x</sup> God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water: and she went, filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

20 And God <sup>y</sup> was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, <sup>z</sup> and became an archer.

x Num. 22. 31. 2 Kings 6. 17, 18, 20. Luke 24. 16, 31. y ch. 28. 15. & 39. 2, 3, 21. z ch. 16. 12.

18. *Hold him in thine hand.* Heb. הַחֲזִיק אֶת יָדְךָ בּוֹ strengthen thine hand upon him. Assist and support him; do not desert him, but afford every necessary aid. Thus by a similar usage Is. 42. 6, 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand (Heb. הַחֲזִיק בְּיָדְךָ will strengthen upon thine hand), and will keep thee.' Comp. Note on Josh. 1. 5.

19. *God opened her eyes, and she saw a well.* Not that she had hitherto lacked the use of the outward organs of sight, but the well of water had up to this time escaped her notice, and its locality was now unexpectedly made known to her. Thus of the disciples, Luke 24. 31, 'And their eyes were opened, and they knew him;' previous to which it is said, 'their eyes were holden that they should not know him.' Thus too it is said Num. 22. 31, that 'The Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way;' i. e. he was enabled to see what he had not observed before. By a like metaphorical idiom to open or uncover the ear, (Heb.) 1 Sam. 9. 15. 2 Sam. 7. 27, is to disclose something to any one.

20. *God was with the lad.* That is, prospered him; blessed him in temporal respects. It is a genuine oriental phrase for favouring one and crowning him with prosperity and success in his undertaking. Chal. 'And the Word of the Lord was for the help of the

21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother

<sup>a</sup> took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

a ch. 24. 4.

child.' See Note on Josh. 3. 7.—¶ *Dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.* Not only an adept at the use of the bow and arrow in hunting, but also employing this as his principal weapon on those occasions when, according to the prediction, ch. 16. 12, his 'hand began to be against every man, and every man's hand against him.' The term unquestionably denotes warlike character and practices. It is but another mode of saying that he began to be distinguished for lawless predatory habits, as his descendants have always been. His expulsion from his father's house, and the way of life into which it forced him, would naturally tend to increase any inherent ferocity of temper he may have possessed, and to form and fix that character which was given of him by the Angel before he was born. God brings his predictions to pass, not always, nor generally, by miraculous means, but by the operation and concurrence of natural causes. It would seem that he gradually brought himself to bear, and *finally* to prefer, that way of living which had at first been obtruded upon him by the strong hand of necessity; and thus the prophecy entered upon its incipient fulfilment.

21. *In the wilderness of Paran.* 'This is one part of that great desert (external to Canaan) which it will be useful to consider as a whole, to assist in giving an idea of the connection of such of its parts as are mentioned under different names in the Scriptures. For this purpose we must figure the Arabian peninsula as an elevated tableland, encircled by a belt of flat, arid, and sandy ground. The only exception is on the southern coast, where a wall of lofty and wild rocks forms an inclosing rampart to Arabia Felix.

Now all the great external deserts mentioned in the Bible form, collectively, the northern part of this great desert-belt of Arabia. Let us then call this northern portion of the belt one desert. It forms by far the widest portion of the whole belt. For the sake of clearness, we may take as its southern boundary the thirtieth parallel of latitude, from the head of the Red Sea (at Suez) to the head of the Persian Gulf, being a line measuring about seven hundred miles. On this line, as a base, the desert extends northward in a triangular figure, the eastern side of which is formed by the Euphrates, and the western by Egypt, Palestine, and Syria; the triangle measuring, from its base to its apex, about three hundred and fifty miles. But these dimensions limit the proportions of the actual desert, which encroaches considerably in different parts beyond the limits which, for the sake of a general view, we have assigned. This being understood, all the deserts of the Scripture, except those in Canaan itself, or the peninsula of Sinai, are included within this great desert. Indeed, the deserts of Sinai are but extensions of the same desert. The principal extent of this desert, that is, all that lies east or southeast of Canaan, is called by way of eminence, 'The Desert.' The other deserts are crowded into the western corner of the triangle, having Palestine and the Mediterranean on the north, the peninsula of Sinai on the south, Egypt on the west, and on the east joining the great desert, of which it is but a portion. This corner of the triangle contains 'the wilderness of Shur,' 'the wilderness of Paran,' 'the wilderness of Zin' (not Sin), and 'the wilderness of Edom.' But the two last do not appear to be any other than different names for the



22 ¶ And it came to pass at that time, that <sup>b</sup> Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his

b ch. 20. 2. & 26. 26.

whole or part of the wilderness of Paran. Thus, then, we reduce the deserts of this part to two, Shur, and Paran. Shur is mentioned in the Note to ch. 16. 7. The desert of Paran, which still retains its ancient name, extends southward from Palestine into the peninsula of Sinai. It is bounded on the west by the desert of Shur, and on the east by the gulf of Akaba and by the valley (El Ghor and El Araba) which extends between that gulf and the Dead Sea. The reports of modern travellers have only made us acquainted with the southern portion of this desert; that is, the part which is in or borders on the peninsula of Sinai. From the comparison of their accounts, it seems to be a dreary and desolate region, with a soil sometimes sandy, and at other times calcareous, strewed with loose pebbles and flints. The uniformity of its surface is broken by various chains of hills, and by numerous ravines and glens, as well as by the beds of winter torrents, in which, from the inequality of the surface, the rain-water collects and gives birth to a vegetation of low shrubs. *Coloquintida* grows abundantly in such situations, and is collected by the Arabs for domestic and medicinal uses.' *Pict. Bible.*—¶ *His mother took him a wife.* The business of marriage in the East is generally managed by the parents, and more especially by the mother. She makes the selections of partners for her children, and arranges all the preliminaries, except the settlement of the dowry, which is left to the father. It shews a peculiar deference to established usages that one living so wild a life as Ishmael, one who was emphatically a son of the desert, should

host spake unto Abraham, saying, <sup>c</sup> God is with thee in all that thou doest:

c ch. 26. 28.

yet, in this matter, subject himself so entirely to the will of his mother. It is a striking instance of the fixedness of oriental customs.

22. *It came to pass at that time, &c.* The mention of the present incident seems to be introduced here for the purpose of informing us how it was, that after a roving and unsettled life of sixty years, Abraham was at length favoured with somewhat of a long period of rest. It was indeed the will of Heaven that his lot in the main, even to the close of life, should be that of a sojourner and a pilgrim, but in the country of Abimelech he is blessed for a longer time than usual, with a tranquil abode. This was a well-timed comfort, coming as it did not long after the banishment of Ishmael and Hagar, and affording him the opportunity to devote himself more leisurely to the rearing of that son in whom not only his own but the hopes of the world were centered. In regard to the conduct of Abimelech on this occasion, we may observe (1.) *The motive* which induced this friendly request; he 'saw that God was with him.' Probably the news of the extraordinary birth of Isaac and of the various incidents which had grown out of it, had reached the court of Abimelech and become a topic of conversation. 'This,' he would perhaps say to himself, 'is a great man, and a great family, and will become a great nation; the blessing of heaven attends him. It is our wisdom therefore to take the earliest opportunity to put ourselves on good terms with him.' In proposing this he was acting more for his interest than he was aware of, for God in blessing Abraham had promised to 'bless them that blessed him,

23 Now therefore <sup>d</sup>swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: *but* according to the kindness that

I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

24 And Abraham said, I will swear.

<sup>d</sup> Josh. 2. 12. 1 Sam. 24. 21.

and to curse them that cursed him.' In making a covenant, therefore, with Abraham he was virtually making a covenant with the God of Abraham. (2.) The *solemnity* with which he wished the friendship to be confirmed; 'Swear unto me by God.' With this request Abraham complied though we cannot suppose that he needed to be sworn not to deal falsely; but as posterity was concerned, the more solemn the engagement the better. But why should covenants, promises, oaths, be necessary in the commerce of human life? It is, alas, for no other reason than that men are false, treacherous, and perfidious. The manners and customs of past times only serve to convince us, that in every age the corruption of man has been so great upon the earth, that ordinary obligations will not bind; that without the sanctions of religion neither the sense of honour or justice or interest will avail to preserve men in a course of rigid integrity. No other argument is necessary to prove that our nature is depraved than the necessity of solemn appeals to the Deity, making 'an oath for confirmation an end of all strife.'—'Among the Arabs of the present day, the name of God is heard in almost every sentence they speak: and it is not seldom invoked to give weight to the most mendacious assertions. But there is no people who, with more fearfulness and awe, shrink, even in a just matter, from appealing to that great Name in a solemnly administered oath. Most Arabs would much rather lose a small sum than venture to swear in the name of God, however truly they might swear.

They seem to attach supernatural consequences to such an act, and to believe that the Almighty would resent having his name made subservient to earthly purposes. Their most solemn oath is, 'By God, and in God, and through God.' *Pict. Bible.*

23. *That thou wilt not deal falsely with me, &c.* Heb. *אם תשקר לי* if thou shalt lie unto me. An elliptical mode of speech in which an imprecation is to be understood; the complete sentence standing somewhat thus, 'If thou doest so, woe be unto thee,' or, 'The Lord will avenge the perjury.' The sense therefore is, 'Swear to me here by God, who, if thou violatest this compact, will avenge it, that according to the kindness which I have showed unto thee, thou shalt do unto me and my country.' Gr. 'That thou wilt not wrong me.' Chal. 'That thou wilt not hurt me.' Mr. Bruce, the traveller, came to a place, called Shekh Ammer, from the Arab Shekh, of which place he got a pledge that he should not be molested in his journey across the desert to Cosseir. A number of people afterwards assembled at the house. 'The great people among them,' says the traveller, 'came, and after joining hands, repeated a kind of prayer, by which they declared themselves *and their children* accursed if ever they lifted up their hands against me in the *tell*, a field in the desert; or, in case that *I or mine* should fly to them for refuge, if they did not protect us at the risk of their lives, their families, and their fortunes, or, as they emphatically expressed it, to the death of *the last male child among them.*'

25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants <sup>e</sup> had violently taken away.

26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing:

<sup>e</sup> ch. 26. 15, 18, 20, 21, 22.

25. *Abraham reproved Abimelech, &c.* That is, argued and expostulated with him. As they were now formally entering into closer terms of amity, it was proper that if there were any cause of complaint on either side, it should be mentioned and adjusted, that nothing which was past, at least, might interrupt their future harmony. Abraham accordingly makes mention of a 'well of water' which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. In the hot and thirsty countries of the East, and to a man whose substance consisted much in cattle, a spring or well of water was of the utmost consequence; and to have it taken away by mere violence, though it might be borne from an enemy, yet it was not to be overlooked, where there was professed friendship. Happily, however, the good feelings and good sense of both parties prevented this offence from coming to an open rupture. The moderation of the patriarch appears plainly from the fact, that he had hitherto borne patiently with the grievance without attempting to right himself by force, although it is perhaps to be inferred from the emphatic term 'reproved' that he supposed the wrong had been at least connived at by the king. When men are disposed to peace, slight grounds of variance are easily overlooked; but where there is a disposition to quarrel, it is easy to magnify the most petty neglect into a gross affront, and to make even an unmeaning look the occasion of a breach.

26. *I wot not, &c.* This is the first time I have heard of the affair; had it

neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I *of it*, but to-day.

27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech: and both of them <sup>f</sup> made a covenant.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 26. 31.

come earlier to my ears justice should have been done before. This was undoubtedly the drift of Abimelech's reply, in which he fairly and fully exonerates himself from blame. The wrong had not been done by him nor with his consent; it was the act of his servants, that is, his *officers*, who perhaps had pretended his authority for their unjust spoliation, than which nothing is more common among the minions and creatures of sovereignty. Subjects are wronged, oppressed, despoiled, and yet their grievances never reach the ears of rulers, because the oppressors find it for their interest to bar access to all voices but their own. Too often are not only the consciences, but the very senses of princes taken into the keeping of corrupt and unprincipled officials.—'Public characters cannot always be accountable for the misdeeds of those who act under them, they had need take care, however, what sort of servants they employ, as while matters are unexplained, that which is wrong, is commonly placed to their account.' *Fuller.*

27. *Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech.* That these animals were intended for sacrifice seems probable from the last clause of the verse, which informs us that they both made, or, as the Hebrew has it, *cut* a covenant, i. e. made a covenant by cutting the victims in pieces. But why the sheep and oxen are said first to have been *presented* to Abimelech is not so clear, unless it were, that Abraham designed to do him greater honour by giving him the animals to

28 And Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves.

29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, <sup>2</sup> What *mean* these seven ewe-lambs, which thou hast set by themselves?

30 And he said, For *these* sev-

g ch. 33. 8.

offer before the Lord. As if duly mindful of his rank as a subject and desirous of showing a proper respect to the king, he seems to have studied to give him the precedence in the whole transaction.

29—30. *Abraham set seven ewe-lambs by themselves, &c.* Mr. Bruce, relating the manner in which the compact before mentioned (on v. 24), was made between his party and some shepherds in Abyssinia says, 'Medicines and advice being given on my part, faith and protection pledged on theirs, two bushels of wheat and *seven sheep* were carried down to the boat;' on which the Editor of the Pict. Bible remarks, that 'Although he seems to have received this merely as a present, yet it is not unlikely that the Arabs intended it as a ratification of the preceding covenant. At any rate there is throughout considerable analogy between the covenant of Abraham and Abimelech, and that of Bruce and the Arabs. The details of the remarkable transactions between Abraham and Abimelech which this chapter contains will be considered with the more interest when it is recollected that it affords the earliest recorded instance of a treaty of peace. Its terms and forms seem to show that such treaties were not then newly invented. The inability of nations or tribes to maintain a continual hostility with their neighbours must have rendered the necessity of such engagements apparent to the earliest generations of mankind. It has been suggested that the practice of giving and receiving belts, pipes, &c. when treaties

are made among the Indians of our continent, is a relic of this oriental custom.—¶ *That they may be a witness, &c.* That is, thine acceptance of these seven lambs shall be an acknowledgment on thy part that this well, which I have digged, belongs to me.

31 Wherefore he <sup>1</sup> called that place Beer-sheba; because there they swear both of them.

h ch. 31. 48, 52. i ch. 28. 33.

are made among the Indians of our continent, is a relic of this oriental custom.—¶ *That they may be a witness, &c.* That is, thine acceptance of these seven lambs shall be an acknowledgment on thy part that this well, which I have digged, belongs to me.

31. *Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba.* Or perhaps more correctly to be understood impersonally, 'one called,' i. e. the name of the place was called, as the same phraseology evidently implies elsewhere. See Note on Gen. 2. 20. Heb. באר שבע *the well of the oath, or, the well of the seven;* from the seven lambs above mentioned. The Heb. word for *swearing or taking an oath* (שבע *shaba*), comes from the same root with the word which signifies *seven*, the reason of which some think to be that an oath was confirmed as by seven, that is, many, witnesses. The connection however between these two terms rests upon grounds difficult to be determined. As the original root for seven has the import of *fulness, satiety, satisfaction*, it may be that it is applied to an oath, as the *completion or perfection, the sufficient security*, of a covenant, that which made it binding and *satisfactory* to each of the parties. For ■ geographical account of Beer-sheba see on v. 14.—¶ *There they swear both of them.* Heb. נשבער *were sworn.* Swearing in Hebrew is always expressed in a passive form of speech, as if it were an act in which one is supposed not to engage voluntarily, but only as he is adjured, or has an oath imposed upon him by another.

32 Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba; then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

33 ¶ And Abraham planted a

33. *And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba.* Gr. 'Planted a field.' Jerus. Targ. 'Planted a paradise or orchard.' The Heb. term עֵשֶׂל *eshel* is supposed by Rosenmuller and others to signify the *tamarisk-tree* and to be used here in a collective sense for a *grove of tamarisks*. Among the ancient versions some render it by *oak* or *oak-grove*, and others, like the English, simply a *grove*. It was probably designed in the first instance for the shading of his tent, and implied the hope of a peaceful, and the purpose of a protracted, residence at that place. But from the ensuing clause it would seem that it was employed also for religious purposes. The practice of using groves and forests as places of worship seems to have been common among all nations. The deep silence and solitude of forests render them peculiarly congenial to feelings connected with religious devotion. As the abominations, however, that characterized idolatrous worship might easily be concealed in groves, we find that the practice of offering sacrifices in such places was forbidden by the Mosaic law, Deut. 16. 21. Accordingly during various reformation which occurred under the reign of pious kings in Israel, they signalized their zeal by cutting down the groves where the people burnt incense to idols. It seems to have been an object of peculiar interest in the Mosaic law, to render every act of social worship a public transaction. No mysterious or secret rite, like those of the Egyptians or Greeks, was allowed. Every religious act was performed in the open view of the world.—The above remarks have been predica-

ted upon the correctness of our present translation, which makes Abraham the planter of the grove. But it will be observed, his name being in Italics, that the original is indefinite, and we incline to the opinion that it is one of those impersonal expressions alluded to above v. 31, and which are of such frequent occurrence in the Hebrew Scriptures.

34 And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

k ch. 4. 26. 1 Deut. 33. 27. Is. 40. 28. Rom. 16. 26. 1 Tim. 1. 17.

ted upon the correctness of our present translation, which makes Abraham the planter of the grove. But it will be observed, his name being in Italics, that the original is indefinite, and we incline to the opinion that it is one of those impersonal expressions alluded to above v. 31, and which are of such frequent occurrence in the Hebrew Scriptures. The writer's design, if we mistake not, was to say that in process of time, in consequence of the transaction above recorded between Abraham and Abimelech, a grove was planted on the spot which became a usual resort for religious worship, a place of the same kind with the *Proscuchæ*, i. e. *oratories* or *praying-places*, which were afterwards so common among the Jews. It is perhaps some slight confirmation of this view of the passage that Abraham is said v. 34, to have sojourned many days in the Philistines' land; but Beer-sheba was not in the land of the Philistines, and why should his planting a grove in Beer-sheba be connected at all with his sojourning in another part of Canaan? Let the 33d verse be construed as we propose and included in a parenthesis, and the narrative runs free and unembarrassed.—¶ *And called on the name of the Lord.* Heb. קרא בשם יהוה *kara beshem Yehovah*, which Shuckford maintains should be rendered 'invoked in the name of the Lord.' This however is not an unquestionable construction, and it will be sufficient to remark of the import of the phrase here, as elsewhere, that it is equivalent to saying, that public worship in general was performed in this grove.











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